NAVAL AVIATION NEWS

January-February 1994

. . . The Search Continues Page 10

NAVAL AVIATION NEWS

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Features

Departments

Covers – Front: designed by *NANews* Art Director Charles Cooney. Back: Dr. J. G. Handelman's photo of U. S. Naval Academy midshipmen participating in a "SPIE line" exercise with a CH-46E from HMM-261.

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RAdm. Bennitt Takes Over N88

It is a pleasure to introduce myself as the Director, Air Warfare (N88). I am filled with excitement and tremendous pride in anticipation of becoming totally engaged in the day-to-day decision-making process that will shape our Navy for years to come, and representing the courageous and dedicated men and women who are Naval Aviation.

Before I update you on recent events, I must acknowledge the tremendous contribution made by Rear Admiral Riley Mixson during his tenure as OP-05/N88. His personal leadership, courage, integrity, perseverance and gentlemanly persuasiveness were responsible for successfully piloting Naval Aviation through treacherous budgetary and political waters and emerging a clear winner. He stood tall and hung tough in the face of tremendous pressure and great odds. Naval Aviation and our nation can never repay his service. I am humbled to follow in the footsteps of such a great leader.

The future of Naval Aviation is bright. Our vision continues to focus on power projection with emphasis on the littoral environment. Recent directives from the Department of Defense, most notably the "Bottom-Up Review" and Defense Planning Guidance, make it clear that the Navy was out in front with the concepts articulated in the white paper "... From the Sea."

We recently scored important successes in the budgeting process. The balanced, executable budget which we submitted to the FY 95-99 defense plan has ensured a strong and viable Naval Aviation force structure well into the next century. We have developed and justified a plan that calls for 12 carriers (11 active, 1 reserve), 11 carrier air wings (10 active, 1 reserve), 4 strong Marine aircraft wings (3 active, 1 reserve) and a solid maritime patrol aircraft force structure.

In the process of developing this plan, many difficult decisions were made and more will probably be required in the near future. The objectives of our program were to recapitalize the Navy now and continue to devote a high percentage of our budget to readiness. We will continue to aggressively pursue the procurement of systems that ensure modern, capable forces well into the 21st century. These two objectives are intertwined.

Some highlights of our FY 95 budget submission include: funding for the FA-18E/F *Hornet*; E-2C Group II upgrade; F-14 Block I, including air-to-ground upgrade for 210 aircraft; AV-8B remanufacture to include night attack capability; P-3 Antisurface-warfare Improvement Program (AIP); V-22 *Osprey*; EP-3 modifications; Joint Standoff Weapon (JSOW); and Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAM). As always, we would like to field many of these superb capabilities *yesterday*. Nonetheless, we have a clear and executable path toward enhancing our contributions to security of the nation.

A new program for development of advanced technologies aimed at the next-generation tactical aircraft has emerged under joint Navy/Air Force control. It is called the Joint Advanced Strike Technology Program (JASTP). The program will develop a new concept of modularity for Navy and Air Force aircraft. It will work toward the harmonization of requirements and the demonstration of common baselines for advanced engines and airframe structures, low observable technology, advanced open system architecture for avionics, sensor technology and lean manufacturing techniques. I believe that the JASTP concept will lead to a family of aircraft with much commonality, but not necessarily the same platform for Navy/Marines and Air Force. It is possible for this program to produce a next-generation aircraft in the 2010-2013 period.

November 11 was yet another great day to be a part of Naval Aviation. On a clear and bright Veteran's Day in Newport News, Va., Mrs. Margaret Stennis Womble, christened CVN 74: USS *John C. Stennis*. CVN 74 is emblematic of our nation's continuing commitment to a strong Navy anchored by Naval Aviation. As further testimony to that support, Senators Warner and Robb of Virginia both spoke of the over one billion dollars for CVN 76 long-lead procurement funding that congress had appropriated on the evening of the 10th.

Our naval forces continue to provide the nation with unmatched capabilities across the spectrum of worldwide contingencies. The cornerstone of American success in sustaining its ideals and looking after its interests throughout the world is our men and women in uniform. Your dedication and professionalism in support of our Navy's global mission make me swell with pride every morning when I put on my uniform and polish my wings of gold. I thank you for your consistently superb performance, sacrifices and loyalty. You can be assured that I will strive to provide the same.

I intend to use *Naval Aviation News* as a medium to regularly provide you with points of interest to all of Naval Aviation. Upcoming issues will feature the latest information on our Naval Aviation communities and where they are headed. This magazine is the official voice of Naval Aviation, and I encourage public affairs officers and other interested writers to contribute articles through official channels, and to suggest topics of interest that we can pursue through your Naval Aviation magazine. FLY'EM AND DRIVE'EM SAFE!!

RAdm. Mixson Bids Farewell

As I depart the pattern here at Air Warfare and pass the baton to RAdm. Brent Bennitt, I look back over the past two and a half years. It is staggering how far we have come in so short a time. Decisions have been made – tough decisions that did not come easy. These decisions have resulted in a viable, affordable course that will lead Naval Aviation into the 21st century. I am reminded of what it takes to make Naval Aviation happen. I have a profound and deep respect for each and every one of you who make the team we call Nav profound and deep respect for each and every one of you who make the team we call Naval Aviation work. Without all of you pulling together, plans made here in Washington would be useless. People of Naval Aviation, I salute you and am confident you will continue to hone the country's foremost fighting force to be ready to defend our national interest anywhere, anytime.

God bless, Riley Mixson sends.

See text of RAdm. Mixson's retirement ceremony speech p. 18.

Osborn

The Sinking of a Sea Knight

Two *Sea Knights* and a *Super Cobra* were en route from one base to another with one CH-46 in the lead, the second as number two and the AH-1W as number three on the left side of the flight. While over water at 500 feet, 110 knots, the torque dropped 20 percent, with a noticeable sound, and power was lost in the No. 1 engine of the second CH-46. It had six passengers on board in addition to the three-man crew.

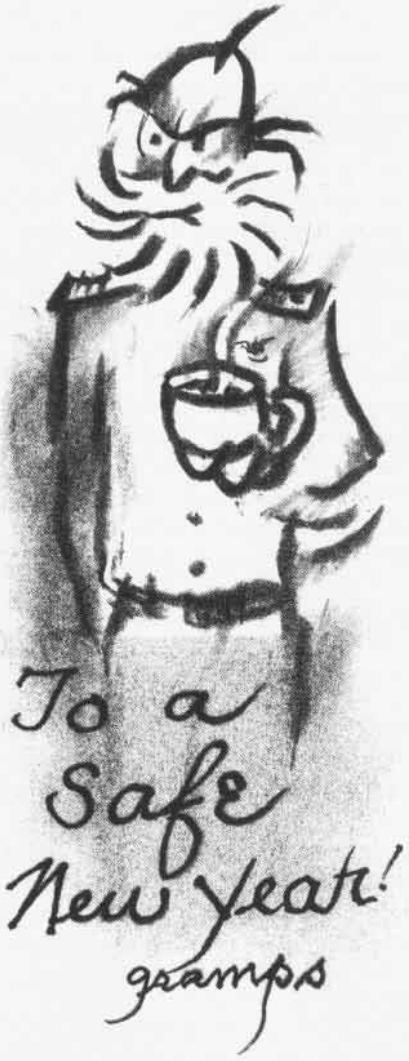
The pilot took the controls from the copilot who had been flying the helo. The pilot immediately armed the emergency throttle system (ETS) and later stated that he then reset the No. 2 ETS, which returned the collective-mounted rocker switch to engine rpm trim function only. He wanted to deactivate the power management system in order to assure the availability of max topping power in the No. 2 engine. He hoped to restore power to No. 1.

The pilot transmitted to Lead that he had lost No. 1 but was on emergency throttle and "seemed to have regained power." The pilot then executed a right turn toward the shoreline, and as he did so, the *Super Cobra* crew radioed that the No. 2, or right-hand, engine of the CH-46 was trailing white smoke.

Believing that his remaining engine was on fire, the pilot took other corrective actions, but severe vibrations of the airframe started and he began a descent. The No. 2 engine flamed out at about 300 feet and the pilot autorotated down to the water, landing with about 35 knots forward velocity and 10-degree nose-high attitude. The ramp detached on impact and water immediately began filling the aircraft, which then rapidly rolled left, went inverted and began to sink.

A search and rescue effort commenced and personnel from the stricken helo emerged and swam toward a life raft dropped by the lead CH-46. One passenger was missing – later found unstrapped, dead inside the wreckage which was retrieved from the sea.

Investigators learned that neither engine was operating upon water entry. All lights on the cockpit's master caution panel and associated electrical wiring were checked and found to function properly.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Singe my whiskers and soak 'em in seawater! This emergency was relatively simple to handle but the pilot misdiagnosed the problem and failed in several other critical areas that may have saved lives and an aircraft. Result: we lost a precious life and a helo that was likely still capable of flyin'.

The CH-46 crew failed to brief the passengers on ditching and emergency egress before the flight. One of the passengers unstrapped during autorotation and was heaved into the crew chief, preventing cabin crash preparation and life raft deployment. The passenger who died mighta released his belt at impact and become incapacitated after bein' thrown about the cabin. A briefing would have told these men to remain seated UNTIL ALL MOTION HAD STOPPED – then try to get out.

Crew coordination took a holiday on this one, big time. Indications were that the CH-46 had suffered a number one engine compressor stall. When that happens, NATOPS (Naval Air Training and Operating Procedures Standardization) sez: "Recovery can be accomplished by shutting down the affected engine and attempting a restart."

The pilot never tried to secure the

bad engine (No. 1) and concentrate on flying toward land with No. 2. He never delineated duties within the cockpit and became saturated with info while the copilot became a passenger. In the mishap report, there's confusion as to who did what.

No one could explain the white smoke, by the way.

Investigators figured there was a power surge from No. 2 engine which the pilot figured was comin' from No. 1. That made him think he had regained power. Turns out, the engineers could not produce normal power in No. 1 after restoring the wreckage. Somehow, the pilot inadvertently oversped No. 2, causing it to shut down. The engineers found No. 2 capable of functioning properly.

Sad story. 'Nuff sed.

Three for the Break

A flight of three jets in "wedge" formation approached the break for landing following an air combat maneuvering (ACM) flight with dissimilar aircraft. An FA-18C *Hornet* was in the lead with an F-5E *Tiger II* on the left and an A-4E *Skyhawk* on the right. The lead FA-18 had detached earlier due to fuel state and the second *Hornet* became flight leader.

After switching to tower frequency, the "new" leader in the *Hornet* signaled his wingman by positioning his hands alongside each other and rolling first to the left, and then the right, twice, to indicate three aircraft breaking to the left at minimum interval. The F-5 pilot signaled thumbs up and so did the *Skyhawk* pilot. The leader did not give a cross-under signal to the F-5.

The tower cleared the flight for a left carrier break. The flight descended to 750 feet with the leader planning to commence the break over the intersection of two runways. At the break point, the leader looked to his left, from the leading edge of his *Hornet*, forward. Seeing no traffic, he "kissed off" the wingman on his right and initiated a sharp left turn.

Lead suddenly felt and heard a loud thump. The A-4 pilot transmitted, " No! No!" as Lead broke. But the *Hornet* had struck the F-5. Immediately, on tower frequency, someone called, " Eject, eject, eject!" At first, the *Hornet* pilot thought he had a massive engine failure. He reduced angle of bank and reached for the ejection handle but stopped when he realized his aircraft was still flying. He continued a left-hand turn and climbed to 2,000 feet.

The F-5 had begun an easy left roll when Lead started his break. Following impact, the *Tiger* rolled right into a nose-low spiral toward the ground, striking the earth inverted, 50 degrees nose down. The aircraft exploded. The pilot was killed.

The *Hornet* sustained aileron and other damage but was controllable and made an arrested landing. The *Skyhawk* diverted to a nearby commercial field and made a safe recovery.

Grampaw Pettibone says:

Gol dang it! Why, why, why do such things happen? We do formation breaks all the time but still manage to botch 'em up – this one tragically.

Lead never gave the F-5 a cross-under signal. He ASSUMED number three would cross under and maneuver into right echelon on his own. Then he slammed into him, believing the way was clear – a sorry exhibition of basic airwork.

Right after the pair collided, the F-5 pilot was seen leaning forward in a limp state. The cockpit appeared intact but the canopy was missing. Whatever, the *Tiger* went down quickly.

Communications – verbal and visual – took the day off. If you're not gonna give the cross under, at least transmit intentions. Turns out breaking from the wedge was not uncommon at this field, but usually the aircraft (wingman) on the left broke first.

All Gramps can say is this: if you're the leader, in similar circumstances, make sure all wingmen are on the same page. Don't create doubt.

RAdm. Brent Bennitt, New Director, Air Warfare

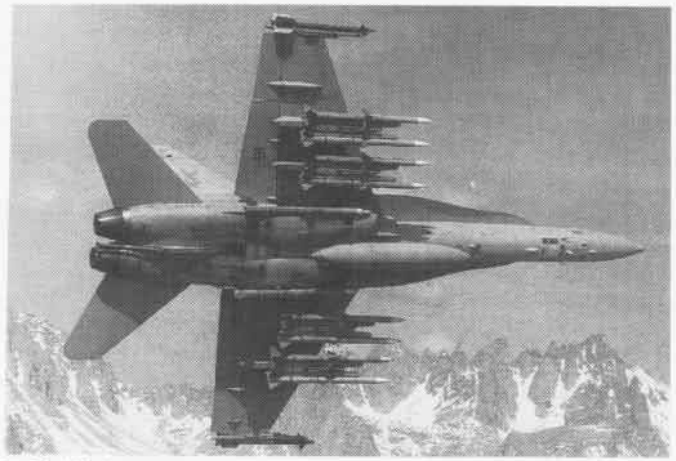
RAdm. Brent Bennitt relieved RAdm. Riley Mixson on 22 November as the Chief of Naval Operation's head of Air Warfare. RAdm. Bennitt was commissioned from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1964 and designated a Naval Aviator 18 months later. He is reporting from command of Carrier Group 5 and Battle Force Seventh Fleet, where his task force was awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation for its performance during the 1992 deployment to the Arabian Gulf.

Moffett P-3s Shift Home

VPs 40 and 46 and Pat-Wing-10 have moved to NAS Whidbey Island, Wash., from NAS Moffett Field, Calif. As a result of the base closure and realignment process, NAS Whidbey Island was chosen as the new home after the decision was made to close Moffett.

AMRAAM Missiles Cleared for FA-18s

The Navy approved the AIM-120 Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missile (AMRAAM) for use on fleet FA-18s. In September 1993, *Hornet* squadrons fired 30 AMRAAMs during exercises on both coasts; 28 missiles performed properly. The AMRAAM is a lighter, faster missile than the AIM-7 Sparrow and has a multi-shot launch and leave capability. The AMRAAM was developed in the early 1980s as a joint service, beyond-visual range weapon for Navy FA-18 and F-14 aircraft, as well as Air Force F-15s and F-16s.



An FA-18C Hornet from VX-4 on a test mission with 8 AMRAAMS and 2 Sidewinder missiles.

Target Missile Contract Awarded

Beech Aircraft Corporation, a unit of Raytheon, has been chosen by the Navy to provide 92 AQM-37C target missiles; deliveries will begin in late 1994. The contract for $17.9 million includes targets, spares, kits, data and an engineering upgrade with state-of-the art avionics equipment. Between 50 and 120 targets are also options for the Navy to order each year for four additional years. Initially developed for the Navy and introduced to the fleet in 1962, the AQM-37 has been continually updated for improved performance. This latest model includes a new digital autopilot, telemetry system for flight evaluation, command/control system allowing lateral maneuvers for course correction – as well as dives and pull-ups to simulate missile threats – and an increased altitude capability and speed performance to 80,000 feet and Mach 3.

HM-18 Transitions to MH-53E Helicopters

In August 1993, HM-18 transferred all its RH-53Ds to Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 772, NAS Willow Grove, Pa. Six new MH-53Es were scheduled to arrive in December 1993 directly from the manufacturer, Sikorsky Aircraft. Squadron maintenance personnel attended schools to transition their skills to the new helo.

Training Systems Center Gains Name Change

The Naval Training Systems Center, Orlando, Fla., was redesignated the Naval Air Warfare Center, Training Systems Division, effective 1 October 1993. Although, not a mission change, the division administers contracts in excess of $6 billion and has responsibility for life-cycle management of training systems and also conducts research and development to enhance methods and applicable technologies.

Marine Aircrewman Donates Medal of Honor to Museum

In October 1993, former Marine Private First Class Raymond M. Clausen presented his Vietnam War medal to the National Museum of Naval Aviation, Pensacola, Fla. He was awarded the medal for actions on 31 January 1970 when he disobeyed orders to remain aboard his helicopter and, instead, leaped from the hovering aircraft with a stretcher. Under enemy fire, he raced across the mine-laden area to assist in carrying severly wounded Marines to the waiting aircraft. On six separate occasions, Clausen left the comparative safety of the helicopter to assist wounded Marines. A resident of Ponchatoula, La., he is only the second enlisted naval aircrewman to be awarded the Medal of Honor. The first was a Marine gunnery sergeant during WW I.

Raymond Clausen and Capt. Rasmussen

Second Marine Medal of Honor Donated to Museum

On 19 November 1993, Mrs. Nancy Pless Monroe and Mrs. Joann Pless Smith,

mother and widow, respectively, of Maj. Stephen W. Pless, USMC, donated his Medal of Honor to the National Museum of Naval Aviation, Pensacola, Fla. The nation's most prestigious military medal was awarded to Maj. Pless for his actions as a Marine helicopter pilot on 19 August 1967 during which he flew his gunship against an enemy force attacking four American soldiers on a beach in Quang Ngai Province, Vietnam. Launching a rocket and machine gun attack to drive away 30-50 enemy soldiers, he then landed his helo on the beach between the Americans and the enemy to rescue the wounded. Even though the gunship was under intense gunfire attack and the enemy repeatedly charged it, Pless ensured all wounded were aboard and then flew the overloaded helicopter toward the sea. After settling into the sea four times, he finally was able to fly the helicopter out of danger, preventing the annihilation of the tiny force. His three crew members received the Navy Cross for their actions. Maj. Pless was killed in a motorcycle accident in Pensacola in 1969.

Early Out Program Expanded

Commanding officers now have the authority to approve early outs for sailors who are within one year of their end of active obligated service (EAOS). This allows sailors with an EAOS date of 30 September 1995 or earlier to request early separation. Sailors accepting the offer must separate no later than 30 September 1994. COs consider each request on a case-by-case basis after determining the impact of the sailor's early separation on unit readiness. Commands will not receive a relief for those opting for early out until the individual's Projected Rotation Date. As in the past two years, applying for early separation is strictly voluntary and no financial compensation is offered. These individuals are eligible for transition services, however, including programs offered under the Transition Assistance Management Program.

AOCS/OCS Consolidation

Starting with the first 13-week class in April 1994, both aviation and nonaviation officer candidates will attend Officer Candidate School (OCS) in Pensacola, Fla. The Secretary of the Navy announced that the OCS in Newport, R.I., will relocate and consolidate in Pensacola with Aviation Officer Candidate School. The new Officer Candidate School will have a total of 400 students in 1994 and will include 280 nonaviation officer candidates and 120 aviation candidates. Existing buildings and facilities on NAS Pensacola will be used.

Osprey Finds New Roost at Pax River

Hangar 109 at NAS Patuxent River, Md., is the new home of the V-22 *Osprey* program. The hangar will house the flight test effort for the engineering and manufacturing phase of development. The testing will be conducted by an integrated test team comprised of contractor and government aircrew, engineers, technicians, mechanics and support personnel. Two *Osprey* aircraft arrived in December 1993.

Operation Restore Hope Medal Approved

Veterans of Operation Restore Hope in Somalia have been approved to receive the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The establishing date for the award is 5 December 1992, with no closing date as yet announced. The area of operations for Restore Hope is defined as the total land area and airspace of Somalia, that portion of Kenyan land area and airspace east of 38 degrees east longitude, the Gulf of Aden and that portion of the Indian Ocean north of 5 degrees south latitude and west of 55 degrees east longitude. Additionally, deployed members of other service-designated units who served under Commander Unified Task Forces, Somalia, in direct support of the operations in the qualifying area, are authorized award of the medal.

AN/USM-406C Contract Awarded

Lockheed Sanders Defense Systems Division has received a $4.3-million contract from the Naval Air Systems Command to upgrade 76 AN/USM-406C test sets to the "D" configuration and to provide engineering data and related services. The system tests and evaluates electronic warfare mission readiness and electronic countermeasures (ECM) systems aboard various U.S. and foreign military aircraft. It provides testing of internal or pod-mounted ECM systems; and used in conjuntion with a test program set containing antenna couplers, it provides complete testing of avionics systems, subsystems and antennas without disassembly. The upgrade will provide technical enhancements to support newly fielded ECM systems.

X-31 Makes 300th Flight

The X-31 International Test Program announced its 300th flight, made by aircraft number two on 7 October 1993. Karl Lang of the German Ministry of Defense piloted the aircraft during the 36-minute flight. The X-31 is an international program that includes NASA, the U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, Rockwell International, the Federal Republic of Germany and Deutsche Aerospace and is managed by the Advanced Research Projects Agency.

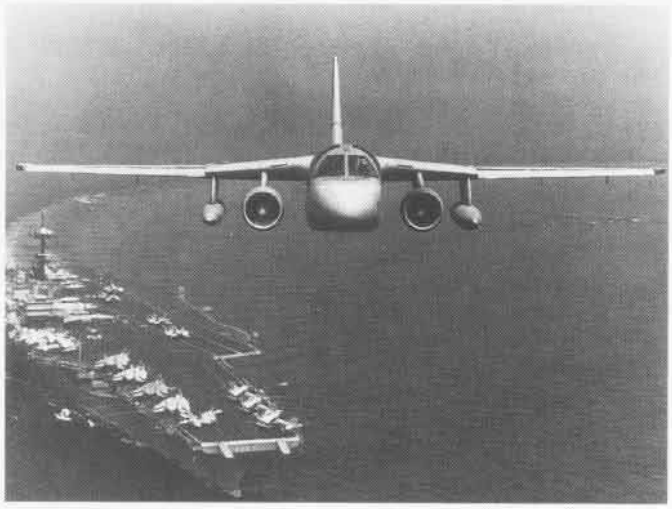
Helo Crash Kills 1, Injures 5

Navy Lt. Joel Todd Martinique died and five others were injured 7 October 1993 at approximately 2043 when a UH-1N "Huey" helicopter carrying six personnel impacted the water after taking off from *Peleliu* (LHA 5). The 5 injured personnel – Capt. Carl A. Gumpert, Jr.; 1st Lt. Scott S. Jensen; Cpl. Michael E. Passaro; LCpl. Wayne E. King; and Seaman Apprentice Caleb Sutton – were flown to Camp Pendleton's Naval Hospital for treatment of minor injuries, after being pulled from the water.

The aircraft was conducting a medical evacuation mission with suspected appendicitis victim Seaman Sutton. Lt. Martinique, a naval doctor, was accompanying the patient when the "Huey" went into the water. The aircraft was part of Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 369 attached to Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 163(C). The cause of the accident is under investigation.

Blue Angels Announce '94 Officer Positions

The Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron, *Blue Angels*, announced its pilot and support officer positions for the team's 1994 show season, tentatively scheduled to begin in early April. *Blue Angels* skipper Cdr. Bob Stumpf will fly in the number one jet as flight leader with Marine Capt. Ben Hancock as his right wingman. LCdrs. Scott Anderson and Doug Thompson will return as *Blue Angels* left wing and slot positions, respectively. LCdr. Dave Stewart will fly as lead solo, with Lt. Rick Young as opposing solo. The narrator will be newcomer Lt. Dave Kidwell, and Lt. Rob Surgeoner returns as the events coordinator. Flying the C-130 *Hercules* "Fat Albert" are Marine Corps Capts. Joe Michalek, Craig Williams and Patrick Delong. Supporting officers for 1994 include maintenance officer Lt. Mark Evans, flight surgeon Lt. Perry Bechtle, administrative officer Lt. John Ottery, public affairs officer Lt. John Kirby and supply officer Lt. Richard Whelan.



An S-3B overflight of Saratoga (CV 60).

Viking Squadrons Now Sea Control Squadrons

The Navy's carrier-based, twin-jet S-3B *Viking* squadrons, formerly known as "air antisubmarine" squadrons, were redesignated "sea control" squadrons by the Chief of Naval Operations. The new name more accurately describes the versatile role of the S-3B and its changing mission in naval battle groups. Even in the face of shrinking defense dollars, deploying S-3B squadrons were recently granted an increase in size from six to eight aircraft, largely due to the demand of battle group commanders.

The S-3B carries a crew of four and has a range of almost 2,000 miles. It is designed to loiter on station for hours and to dash at high speeds. It carries an array of weapons, from torpedoes to conventional bombs to the Harpoon Antiship missile. "Sea control" *Viking* squadrons are home-based at NAS Cecil Field, Fla., and NAS North Island, Calif. – with one squadron at NAF Atsugi, Japan, permanently assigned to *Independence* (CV 62).

Joint Flight Training Program Begins

The first phase of a new Joint Primary Training Program began 1 October 1993 as five Air Force aviators reported to NAS Whiting Field, Pensacola, Fla., while flight instructors from the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard reported to Randolph AFB, Texas, for training. The Air Force pilots will be assigned to Training Squadron 3 after indoctrination. Upon completion of instructor training, the Navy, Marine and Coast Guard pilots will then report to the 35th Flying Training Squadron at Reese AFB, Texas, to fly the T-37. As a result of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's "Report on the Roles, Missions and Functions of the Armed Forces," Secretary of Defense Les Aspin directed the Air Force, with assistance from the Navy, to "consolidate initial fixed-wing aircraft training for all services and transition to a common primary training aircraft."

By March 1994, 4 more instructors will report to Whiting Field, followed by a continuous exchange of 3 instructors each quarter thereafter until 2 full-joint prototype squadrons are manned with 30 exchange instructors.

FA-18s Pass Major Milestone

The FA-18 *Hornet* has recorded more than 2-million flight hours in only 10 years of fleet operation. A U.S. Marine Corps FA-18, flying over Bosnia-Herzegovina, pushed the *Hornet* program over the mark on 17 September 1993. Marine Majors Michael Sawyer and Steve Nedderson made the milestone flight in a two-seat FA-18D from VMFA(AW)-533. The squadron was deployed to Aviano Air Base, Italy, in support of Operation Deny Flight at the time of the flight.

The 2-million flight hours include flight time of all McDonnell Douglas FA-18s in service with the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and the air forces of Canada, Australia, Spain and Kuwait. The aircraft has been averaging about 220,000 flight hours per year. The *Hornet* reached the record flight-hour mark significantly faster than the Navy's other current tactical aircraft – the A-6 *Intruder* and the F-14 *Tomcat*. The A-6, which began operations with the Navy in 1963, passed 2-million flight hours 23 years later in 1986 and has now logged over 2.6-mil-

lion flight hours. Since beginning operations in 1973, the F-14 has logged just over 1.65-million flight hours in 20 years of service.

NADeps Recognized by EPA

The Naval Aviation Depots at Cherry Point, N.C., and Norfolk, Va., are two of 36 facilities worldwide recognized by the Environmental Protection Agency for their programs to eliminate ozone-depleting materials from the atmosphere. The Stratospheric Ozone Protection Awards for NADeps Cherry Point and Norfolk were presented at ceremonies in October 1993.

Whiting Field T-34Cs to Receive NACWS

All T-34C *Turbo-Mentors* based at Whiting Field, Fla., are scheduled to receive new Naval Aircraft Collision Warning System (NACWS) equipment developed for the Navy by B.F. Goodrich Flight Systems, Inc. The system will provide pilots with a protection zone of 1 nautical mile radius, plus or minus 500 feet.

The NACWS determines if any aircraft threaten to penetrate the protection zone and if a threat exists, warning tones will sound when an aircraft is 20 seconds and 10 seconds away from the outside edge of the zone. In addition, a computer display provides a visual indication of up to 50 aircraft being tracked to a range of 20 miles, including aircraft within the protection zone. A formal operational assessment of the system was conducted between 1 November and 15 December 1993 with final production award projected for 15 January 1994. Full installation is to begin in February or March 1994.

Last East Coast H-2 Det Returns Home

Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron Light (HSL) 32 closed another chapter in U.S. naval history on 17 November as the last deployed East Coast *Seasprite* detachment returned from the Arabian Gulf to NAS Norfolk, VA. The detachment, embarked on board *Gallery* (FFG 26), operated the Kaman SH-2F helicopter. HSL-32 will be disestablished 1 January 1994 after more than two decades of service to the Navy.

CNO Team Changes Name

The Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Retention Team is now the CNO Career Information Team. The name change now reflects the team's mission – to provide Navy people accurate and timely information on recent personnel policy decisions. The team is comprised of senior officer and enlisted personnel who travel annually to most naval installations worldwide to brief personnel on the latest policy updates concerning career progression, advancements, pay and allowances, separations and retirements. The team will start 1994 with visits to Caribbean bases in January, followed by East Coast bases in February, and West Coast installations (including Alaska) in March and April. Gulf Coast bases are scheduled for May, the Western Pacific and Hawaii in June and July, and Europe and the Mideast in September.

Disestablished...

VP-31 Black Lightnings

A 26 August 1993 ceremony at NAS Moffett Field, Calif., marked the disestablishment (officially 1 November) of Patrol Squadron (VP) 31 after over 33 years of active service. Capt. Gregory Markwell was the last CO of the *Black Lightnings*.

Established at NAS North Island, Calif., on 30 June 1960, VP-31 served as the replacement training squadron for the 15 Pacific Fleet patrol squadrons flying the P2V-5/6/7 (SP-2E/G/H) *Neptune* and the P5M-1S/2S (SP-5A/B) *Marlin* flying boat. VP-31 trained pilots, observers, aircrewmen and maintenance personnel to fly and maintain the complex antisubmarine aircraft. During the Vietnam War, VP-31 also trained crewmen to fly OP-2E versions with Observation Squadron 67, and trained Army crewmen to fly the AP-2E "Crazy Cat" signals intelligence collection version.

On 4 January 1963, VP-31 Detachment Alpha was established at Moffett Field, base for VP squadrons as they transitioned to the new P-3A *Orion*, soon followed by the P-3B. In 1965-66, the detachment also trained Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) and Royal New Zealand Air Force personnel to operate the P-3B version. In January 1967, the fleet transition had progressed to the point when Detachment Alpha became the parent squadron, and operations at the North Island detachment drew down as the SP-5B was phased out that year, followed by P-2 training in 1969; the detachment shut down in 1970. During its decade at North Island, VP-31 trained 2,000 pilots, 700 Naval Flight Officers, and 10,600 aircrewmen and maintenance personnel.

In 1970, VP-31 introduced the computerized P-3C version to the Pacific Fleet, beginning a transition of Pacific Fleet squadrons that was to take 20 years. While continuing P-3A/B/C training for the Navy, the squadron also undertook some training for EP-3B/E aircrews for fleet air reconnaissance squadrons, as well as transition of Spanish crews in the P-3A and Imperial Iranian Air Force crews in the P-3F. In 1974, VP-31 undertook training in the P-3C Update I and the P-3B TACNAVMOD "SuperBee." In 1978, VP-31 assisted the RAAF as it acquired P-3C Update II versions. During the 1980s, VP-31 eventually trained crews in the P-3C and its Mod, Update I, II, II.5 and III, and III Retrofit versions, as well as the TACNAVMOD versions of the P-3A and P-3B.

The *Black Lightnings* also operated a UP-3A transport, and TP-3A pilot trainer versions with modernized avionics.

As a Fleet Readiness Squadron (FRS), VP-31 was on the cutting edge of many innovative training programs. In 1970, a Fleet Readiness Aviation Maintenance Personnel department was established, providing hands-on training for more than 550

maintenance personnel annually. In 1978, implementation of Instructional Systems Development, a project sponsored by the Chief of Naval Operations, successfully introduced advanced training techniques and devices to VP squadrons Navy wide. VP-31 became the Navy's Model Manager for VP Instructional Systems, Maritime Patrol Personnel Qualification Standards and NATOPS (Naval Air Training and Operating Procedures Standardization) model manager for the P-3.

In addition to personnel from the nations mentioned above, VP-31 trained personnel from the United Kingdom, Japan, Canada, France, Norway, Portugal, Korea, Thailand, Greece, Taiwan and the Netherlands. Over the years, VP-31 instructors trained more than 7,000 pilots and flight officers, 10,300 enlisted aircrewmen, and 14,300 maintenance personnel.

With the reduction in the number of patrol squadrons since 1991 and the decision to close NAS Moffett Field, the Navy decided to consolidate P-3 FRS functions with VP-30, the FRS at NAS Jacksonville, Fla. Beginning in December 1991, VP-31 gradually transferred its training programs to VP-30, completing the transfer in May 1993.

NWEF Albuquerque

Naval Weapons Evaluation Facility (NWEF) Albuquerque, N.M., was disestablished in a ceremony on 4 June 1993 after almost 41 years of service. Capt. Roger K. Hull was the last CO.

Established in August 1952 as the Naval Air Special Weapons Facility (NASWF), the activity grew out of the U.S. Naval Air Detachment at Albuquerque, which was set up in June 1949 as a tenant of Kirtland AFB to forge a connection between Naval Aviation and the Armed Forces Special Weapons Project (later to become the Defense Nuclear Agency). From that humble beginning, with 26 personnel and three aircraft (a P2V-2, an AJ-1, and a JRB-4), the detachment's role expanded with the growth of the Navy's nuclear weapons program to become a full command of 200 personnel and 11 aircraft under Cdr. (later Adm.) Frederick H. Michaelis.

NASWF's mission was to adapt special weapons to naval aircraft and to conduct special weapons tests in connection with the Atomic Energy Commission. In conjunction with this mission, NASWF developed a close working relationship with Naval Ordnance Test Station (later Naval Weapons Center), China Lake, Calif.

NASWF was combined with the Naval Nuclear Ordnance Evaluation Unit in March 1961 and redesignated NWEF. Over the years, the facility flew and tested virtually every type of nuclear-capable fighter, attack and antisubmarine warfare aircraft in the Navy inventory, involving the nuclear compatibility and safety certification of over 76 versions of 32 aircraft types. NWEF also became the mainstay of the Navy's surface ship, submarine and artillery nuclear weapons programs. NWEF successfully completed these crucial tasks and contributed to the Navy's four decades of accident-free nuclear weapons systems operations in spite of high-volume production, fielding and deployment of nuclear weapons delivery systems during times of fluctuating world tensions.

NWEF was a popular stop for cross-country flights, and also contributed to the Navy's recruiting effort with the formation in 1975 of the Navy Hot Air Balloon Team. With the restructuring of Navy research, development, test and evaluation organizations, NWEF shut down its flight test operations in September 1992, transferring the last aircraft to bear the distinctive Thunderbird markings, FA-18s and A-7s. The Hot Air Balloon Team was transferred to the Naval Recruiting Command. When NWEF was disestablished, the personnel assigned to NWEF were reorganized into Naval Air Warfare Center, Weapons Division Detachment Albuquerque, with Cdr. Stephen L. Feeley as officer in charge.

Disestablishment articles by LCdr. Rick Burgess.

A VP-62 P-3C returns from a mission to NAS Jacksonville, Fl.

John C. Stennis (CVN 74) Christened

By JO1(SW) Eric S. Sesit

The seventh *Nimitz*-class aircraft carrier, *John C. Stennis* (CVN 74), was commissioned 11 November 1993, at Newport News, Va. A crowd of nearly 16,000 people turned out to see Margaret Stennis Womble, the ship's sponsor and daughter of the ship's namesake, break a bottle of champagne across the bow. Named for Senator John C. Stennis, a retired Mississippi senator who served in Congress from 1947 to 1988, *Stennis* is scheduled for delivery to the Navy in 1996.

Senator Stennis was elected pro tempore of the Senate for the 100th Congress. He was Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee from 1969 to 1980 and consistently supported U.S. military superiority earning the title "the father of America's modern Navy." Stennis, who was unable to attend the christening, resides in Madison, Miss.

Vice President Al Gore, the principal speaker at the ceremony, said, "He [Stennis] understood clearly that robust military power is essential to support diplomacy ... President Clinton and I are determined that our power projection forces, exemplified by this magnificent ship and her experienced crew, will be second to none. They will be the best trained forces in the world, the best equipped forces in the world, the most combat-ready military forces in the world."

Other speakers at the event included U.S. Senators Charles Robb from Virginia; Thad Cochran, Mississippi; John Warner, Virginia; and Secretary of the Navy John Dalton.

Upon commissioning, *John C. Stennis* will be home to almost 6,000 sailors and airmen. Powered by two nuclear reactors, she will be able to exceed speeds of 30 knots and carry more than 80 aircraft. The ship is 1,092 feet long with a 4.5-acre flight deck.

John C. Stennis left dry dock on 13 November 1993, making room to lay the keel for the next *Nimitz*-class carrier, *United States* (CVN 75). ■

The Tradition of Ship Christenings

The ritual of ship christenings reaches 4,000 years back in recorded history. The practice of using wine or champagne to toast new ships can be traced almost as far back in time.

Ship christenings in the days of the Vikings were marked by the spilling of blood and human sacrifices and incantations by high priests made to appease gods. Greeks and Romans later used water as a token of purification in blessings of the ship and crew, officers, passengers and cargo.

During the Middle Ages, religious shrines were placed about the ship. Many historians agree that wine, as a substitute for blood sacrifice, was offered as the vessel hit the water.

Christening ceremonies during the Tudor era took place after the ship was in the water. Announced by a fanfare of trumpets, a king's lieutenant would appear and be seated in an ornate chair on the ship's poop deck. He was presented with a goblet made of precious metal filled with red wine. After a sip of the wine, he whispered the ship's name, wishing it good luck on voyages.

Then, spilling wine on the deck, he would mark the four points of the compass and drink to the king's health. As a finale, the lieutenant tossed the goblet over the side and left the ship.

Many of the spectators went over the side along with the goblet, hoping to salvage the golden "standing cup."

In the interest of economy, beginning in 1690, a bottle replaced the cup. When champagne became widely known, it was substituted for wine since the more costly champagne was held in higher esteem.

The ceremony of christening a British ship was invariably performed by a male member of the Royal Family or by a dockyard commissioner until 1811 when George IV introduced the first woman sponsor. One sponsor's aim was so poor she hit a spectator who was injured and sued for damages. The Admiralty then directed that in the future, the bottle be secured to the stem of the ship by a lanyard. This is the method still used today.

Champagne has not always been used to christen ships. At Newport News, Va., 10 ships have been baptized with nonalcoholic liquids, from grape juice to waters from the seven seas. in the 1920s, Prohibition dictated the use of nonalcoholic beverages for many christenings. On other occasions, the ship's sponsors or owner substituted a liquid they thought to be more in keeping with the name of the vessel or its namesake.

At Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Co., a great deal of attention is focused on the champagne bottle itself. The bottle is enclosed in a slotted aluminum casing – made in the shipyard – and covered with a crocheted cotton sleeve. The coverings prevent fragments of glass from flying out and possibly injuring bystanders.

The champagne is kept in an insulated bag – at room temperature – to ensure good fizz and splash. If the weather is cold, an electric heater is provided to keep the bag warm and a spare bottle is within reach as a backup to the original, just in case. ■

Location Unknown ...The Search Continues

By Philip M. Strub

The assignment is certain to include austere living conditions, arduous treks in high heat and humidity and treacherous climbs up streambeds and steep hillsides. Team members should also be prepared to encounter leeches, poisonous snakes, unexploded ordnance and mosquitoes carrying malaria, hemorrhagic fever and Japanese encephalitis.

These would seem to make recruiting an impossible task, but in fact there is no lack of volunteers wanting to serve in the teams of the Joint Task Force-Full Accounting (JTF-FA), which deploy to Southeast Asia in search of evidence to help resolve the fate of more than 2,200 Americans unaccounted for as a result of the Vietnam War.

Although the broadcast news media has videotaped aspects of the full accounting mission, the JTF-FA had no comprehensive video documentation of its own. And its senior staff felt the only effective way to communicate how the operations are conducted was to show the teams in action through a videotape presentation.

As a result, the JTF-FA commander, Army Major General and Vietnam combat veteran Thomas H. Needham, requested that an in-depth video documentary be produced and developed to help tell the story of the joint task force and its field operations. General Needham's public affairs officer, Army Lieutenant Colonel David L. Fredrikson, helped quickly put together and deploy a video documentation team which videotaped a recent investigation and recovery operation, called a Joint Field Activity, for two weeks during the summer of 1993.

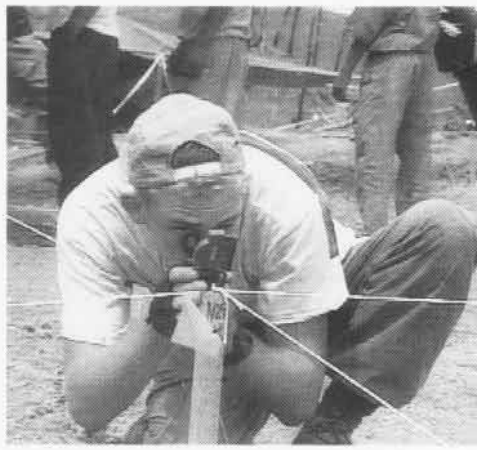
As writer-producer, I led the team, which included video director Mr. Steve Osbrach from the Army Visual Information Center in the Pentagon and cameramen Sergeant First Class Javier Otero and Sergeant Bennie Hayden from the Army's Combat Pictorial Detachment at Fort Meade, Md.

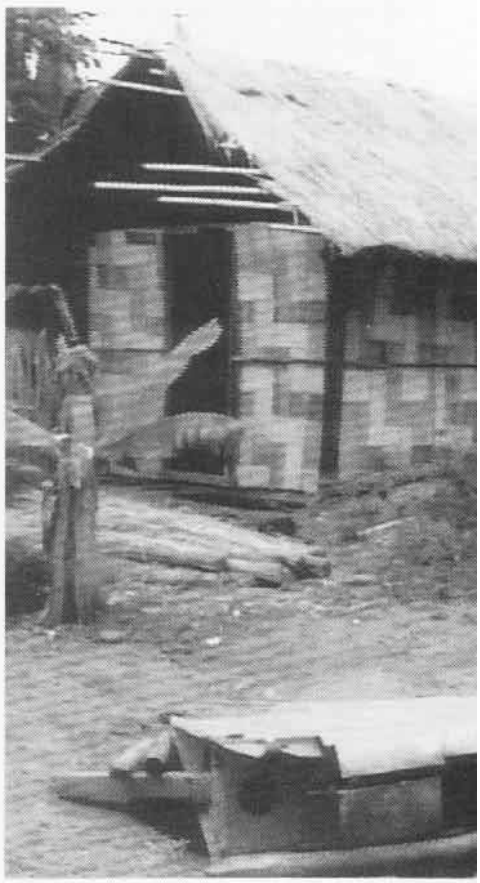
The team began its video documentation in Honolulu, Hawaii. Stationed at Camp H. M. Smith and reporting directly to Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Joint Task Force-Full Accounting is responsible for providing the fullest possible accounting of all the missing service members. The task force prepares extensively for each Joint Field Activity. Supported by the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, the task force researches and analyzes all the available data – historical and recent – to determine which sites in Southeast Asia offer the highest probability for revealing new evidence.

Human remains recovered from Southeast Asia are returned to the lab in Hawaii for further analysis. The lab's forensic experts and other specialists use the latest scientific techniques in attempting to match recovered evidence with missing servicemen. Out of respect for the deceased and their families, the video team was careful not to videotape any human remains that might be those of missing service members.

But the team did videotape some of the dental x-rays that are so crucial to positive identification. The forensic specialists at the lab contend that no two dental restorations, "fillings," are identical. X-rays from the medical records of missing servicemen and those of teeth recovered from a site have been matched with impressive accuracy. This is the single most definitive means for establishing the identity of missing service members.

The team then documented the JTF-FA's four detachments in Southeast Asia, each headed by an Army or Air Force lieutenant colonel. At the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok, Thailand, they covered Det One, which provides the administrative and logistics support for operations in the region.





Above, using standard surveying techniques, a member of the recovery team verifies proper placement of grid lines for excavation operations at the C-130A crash site in A Luoi, Vietnam. Below, near the C-130A crash site, villagers are using a wing flap to dry rice.

At the C-130A crash site, local villagers form a "bucket brigade" to help move soil being carefully examined during excavations. Under the covering at the left, recovery team members sift through each bucketful to make sure that no remains escape detection.

Det Two, located in Hanoi, has greater scope than the other detachments because most of the missing were lost in Vietnam and its coastal waters. Its staff also works closely with counterparts in the Vietnamese government to help bring about the exchange of documents that might contain information helpful in resolving cases. The Vietnamese, whose missing in action number more than 200,000, are interested in obtaining comparable information from the U.S., but without corresponding dental records, their chances of resolving cases are substantially less.

The documents are reviewed by Vietnamese and U.S. researchers in the Joint Documentation Center, a large room at the Vietnamese military museum and archive in Hanoi. While being taped by the video teams, U.S. and Vietnamese researchers watched black and white 35mm newsreels produced by the government of North Vietnam during the war. The Vietnamese also produced records from the Vietnamese "559 Group," which was responsible for the air defense of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. The JTF-FA hopes that these records contain specific information about U.S. air losses.

The video team departed Hanoi, flying to Da Nang aboard a Vietnam Airlines Tupelov passenger jetliner. They transferred to a chartered MI-8 helicopter for the 40-minute flight to a remote site in the mountains near the Laotian border.

The hangars at Da Nang were showing their age, with rusted metal spars and roofing panels torn and adrift, but the ones reinforced with concrete appeared to be in reasonably good condition. After the mission, upon returning to the airfield, the video team noticed five or six MiGs neatly positioned a few hundred yards from the civilian air terminal.

The Vietnamese government has not yet agreed to allow U.S. aircraft to operate in Vietnam, aside from the USAF transports that land in Hanoi to bring human remains back to the U.S. and to provide resupply for JTF-FA operations.

Additionally, satellite tactical communications are prohibited; therefore, teams at remote locations are sometimes out of contact for extended periods of time, since the antiquated switchboard telecommunications of the villages are unreliable.

The helicopter flight, during which the team was not permitted to take still photographs or shoot videotape, ended on a dusty and overgrown soccer field in the tiny village of A Luoi, where scores of onlookers gathered to watch the helo's arrival despite the discomfort caused by its rotor wash.

The members of the team were billeted under spartan conditions in concrete and cinder block "government guest quarters." Bathing facilities consisted of plastic buckets of untreated water – fallen leaves and other debris included – and the other amenities followed suit, although the Vietnamese staff prepared tasty evening meals featuring typical local cuisine, heavy with noodles and rice.

The daily routine began with a half-hour's drive in four-wheel-drive vehicles, veterans of Operation Desert Storm, through the hilly countryside. As the rainy season was just beginning, sudden downpours turned the roads into nearly impassable stretches of slick clay mud, hazardous because the vehicles tended to slide toward the road's steep banks leading to small lakes and streams.

The teams reached a point where they were obliged to continue on foot. Loaded down with all their gear, the teams began an exhausting 45-minute trek to the top of a knoll where the recovery operations were being conducted. Here, the researchers were able to confirm the crash of a C-130A *Spectre* gunship. Documenting

the recovery operation of the C-130A was the single most important requirement for the video team.

In this crash, 20-plus years ago, spotters on the rear ramp of the aircraft survived the crash and reported they had observed a surface-to-air missile launched and streaking toward their aircraft. When it struck the left wing, the gunship exploded and the two spotters were blown from the aircraft. They parachuted to safety but saw the gunship crash into the hilltop. Since no other parachutes were seen, the rest of the crew was listed as unaccounted for.

The recovery element team, headed by an Army captain who was a mortuary specialist, began by placing color-coded pin flags next to all the physical evidence found on the ground. Then, the team's explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) technician – in this case a Marine, but as often a soldier – swept the area with his detection equipment. As everyone anticipated, considering the type of aircraft, a large amount of 20mm projectiles and other rounds of unexploded ordnance were found. The EOD technician recovered them and carefully placed them away from the excavation in a specially marked area.

With the help of villagers recruited by the Vietnamese Office for Seeking Missing Persons, which is always present during recovery operations, vegetation was cleared and bucket brigades were formed to facilitate removing and examining the top layers of soil. In the mountainous area of the crash site, the Vietnamese government representatives found their duties complicated by the fact that most of the local villagers didn't speak Vietnamese, or any language related to Vietnamese. Indeed, their lifestyle and culture seemed in many ways to have been completely by-passed by modern society.

Once the vegetation was cleared, the assistant team leader, an Army sergeant who was a graves registration specialist, determined the site's exact location using Global Positioning System satellite signals and his portable navigation system. The team members then employed standard surveying tools and techniques to lay out a grid. The gridding and excavating were conducted in keeping with the scientific requirements of an archeological dig, under the supervision of a physical anthropologist, Dr. Robert W. Mann, an eight-year veteran of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

Team members painstakingly removed shovelfuls of dirt from the site. The dirt was poured into plastic buckets, which were passed hand to hand until they were eventually emptied onto large, framed metal screens. Researchers carefully broke up and examined even the smallest clods of dirt, while others sifted the contents of each bucketful through the screens.

If anyone spotted what might have been a human remain, they immediately called out to the anthropologist, who sometimes learned a great deal by observing how the remains were positioned in the soil. Because of their high reliability in helping establish identity, teeth were the remains that team members hoped to find.

Before beginning the final voyage home, any human remains recovered are turned over to the Vietnamese government which later returns them to U.S. officials, who accept the remains at a repatriation ceremony with military honors at the airport in Hanoi.

In bright metal transfer cases draped with U.S. flags, the remains receive honors again at a refueling stop at Anderson Air Force Base in Guam, the first U.S. landfall, and once again at Hickam Air Force Base. There is a final honors ceremony once identification has been resolved, and the remains are returned to the families of the service members.

At the C-130A crash site, materials other than human remains and ordnance were brought to the attention of the team life support system expert, Air Force Master Sergeant Clayton M. West. At the site and its immediate environs, there were many objects from the aircraft itself. A 20mm gun was embedded deeply in the hilltop. In one of the tiny, primitive hamlets nearby, villagers were using a wing flap as a platform for drying rice. The team discovered what was believed to be portions of the cockpit in a streambed several hundred meters away.

But the life support system fragments generated the most interest, since they would be closest to human remains. For the video camera, West described a number of objects: pieces of flight gloves, chunks of oxygen hoses and parts of parachute risers.

JTF-FA headquarters for operations in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is a cluster of small buildings in a Hanoi suburb.

After several days of taping, the video crew had obtained all it needed for the video program. The recovery team would continue its excavation of the site until it had been exhausted of significant remains, or until it reached the end of the time agreed upon in advance by the Vietnamese government for the operation. If more excavation was deemed necessary, the site would be revisited during a future Joint Field Activity.

Since erosion and other weathering conditions would likely degrade the excavation already accomplished, the time constraints placed additional pressures on the teams to obtain results in the shortest time possible. The C-130A site was unusual in the amount of materials recovered. Most often, an aircraft crashes with devastating impact and resulting fire, so that immediate recovery efforts yield little

remains. Years of weathering and other damaging forces make recoveries even more difficult.

While the C-130A and other recovery element teams were at work, other smaller teams composed of a different mix of skills were traversing the country. These investigative element teams were conducting the preliminary research necessary to identify sites appropriate for the follow-on recovery teams. The investigators had studied the extensive case history file consisting of reports of the loss and all subsequent investigative and relevant intelligence reports. These were prepared for them by the joint task force analysts and included reports by the Army Central Identification Lab and the Defense Intelligence Agency. They also brought packages of information pertinent to each case, which they referred to continuously as they conducted their research operations.

Aided by U.S. military linguists (Air Force specialists or Navy communications technicians) and Vietnamese counterparts, the teams located and interviewed villagers and others they hoped would be able to shed light on "unaccounted for" cases. They visited sites where eyewitnesses and others reported that service members were buried, aircraft had crashed or other significant events took place. As at the crash sites, time had been detrimental to the progress of the investigative teams. Potential eyewitnesses had died, moved to unknown destinations or fell victim to fading memories.

But the members of this investigative team, led by an Army captain, doggedly pursued every lead and sifted through the information gleaned from their interviews as carefully as the crash site specialists examined the soil. Their findings had to withstand the detailed scrutiny of scientific reexamination.

Although the joint task force has not found evidence that Americans are still being held against their will in Southeast Asia, the available information precludes ruling out that possibility. Therefore, reports of live sightings also receive the necessary priority and resources to be conclusively investigated. Ironically, of the more than 1,600 firsthand live-sighting reports that have been researched by the JTF-FA and the Defense Intelligence Agency, a significant number of recent reports are attributable to sightings of research and recovery team members themselves.

After traveling to Vientiane, Laos, and Phnom Penh, Cambodia, to videotape Det Three and Det Four, respectively, the video team returned to the U.S. with approximately 11 hours of videotape and a comprehensive visual report of the organization and the mission of the Joint Task Force-Full Accounting. A four-minute overview was edited by the Pentagon's Joint Combat Camera Center for dissemination throughout the Pentagon and to the news media.

Additionally, a complete public information video is being created that will visually tell the story of the JTF-FA. The task force will provide copies of the program to families, military casualty resolution centers and public affairs offices, military service organizations and other groups. The unedited original videotapes will be maintained for historical purposes at the Department of Defense Motion Media Records Center.

For investigative and recovery teams, the work is physically and psychologically exhausting, the weather hot and humid and the hours long. Most of the team members are too young to remember specifics about the war, but they are quite aware of its legacy of anguish to the families of missing Americans. They also believe in the individual contribution that each can make in helping to confirm the fate of those in unresolved cases. For the video team members, the production was a sobering and tiring experience. But they returned with heightened appreciation for the full accounting mission and those who perform it – and the satisfaction of helping to tell their story. ■

Mr. Strub is Special Assistant for Audiovisual in the Department of Defense and a Navy captain in the Naval Historical Center's reserve unit.

Members of the investigative team meet with Vietnamese government MIA representatives and local officials prior to beginning research operations in the countryside not far from Da Nang.

Workers establish a grid system to ensure every inch of the crash site is thoroughly canvassed for remains.

Till They Come Home

By Cdr. Russ Jowers and Joan A. Frasher

Although the Vietnam Conflict ended in 1973, approximately 440 Navy men, most of them aircrew, are still unaccounted for, and many of their families continue to have questions that have not yet been answered. To assist them, the Navy has a POW/MIA section within the Casualty Branch of the Bureau of Naval Personnel (BuPers). Manned by two aviators, Lieutenant Commander Jeff Manor and Lieutenant Geoff Stothard, the POW/MIA section advocates for families and acts as their primary liaison with Department of Defense (DoD) organizations investigating Vietnam Conflict losses.

"It is appropriate that POW/MIA Affairs is part of the Casualty Assistance Branch at BuPers," stated LCdr. Manor, "since Casualty's primary purpose is to assist families from the time an incident occurs – whether the member has died or is listed as missing – until the loss is fully resolved. My job here is very rewarding, and the families with whom I have contact are wonderful people who deserve an answer to the questions they have been asking for 20-plus years."

According to LCdr. Manor, "There are various organizations involved in conducting investigations into the Vietnam Conflict losses, the primary one being Joint Task Force-Full Accounting (JTF-FA). JTF-FA is home-based at Hickam AFB, Hawaii, with detachments in Bangkok, Thailand; Hanoi,

JO1(SW) Eric S. Sesit

Eyeglass frames and a watch are a few of the items that helped researchers establish the fate of the unaccounted for.

Vietnam; Phnom Penh, Cambodia; and Vientiane, Laos. From those detachments, JTF-FA sends out investigation teams in the latter three countries. Also involved in determining the resolution of losses are the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii (CILHI), whose primary mission is to make definitive identification of remains from Vietnam, Korea, WW II and the cold war; and the DoD POW/MIA Office (DPMO) in Arlington, Va., which correlates information, intelligence and photography to attempt to resolve those losses that are still unresolved."

The goal of DoD's efforts is the fullest possible accounting for those still missing. The investigations in Southeast Asia include excavations of crash sites for remains recovery, analysis of information and artifacts received from the Vietnamese and priority follow-up on live sighting reports. During the excavation of a crash site, investigators search for material that discloses whether the service member exited the aircraft. "Life support specialists" at JTF-FA analyze the recovered material, and if, for example, pieces of a crew member's oxygen mask lip microphone are found among the wreckage, it is reasonable to conclude that the individual did not exit the aircraft before impact. In multiseat aircraft, analysts search for unique items to account for each crew member. During recovery operations, careful steps are taken to ensure that no remains from a crash site are overlooked. A team anthropologist is continuously on site to analyze recovered material. If no remains are recovered, all excavated material and other available information are used by JTF-FA to establish priorities for future operations.

The JTF-FA teams who work on field investigations operate in a difficult and often dangerous environment. Because of the threat of attacks on teams in Cambodia, who are unarmed because of their humanitarian mission, investigations were temporarily suspended, although recovery operations recommenced this past November.

Recently, in a significant breakthrough with the government of Vietnam, archives of that country have been opened to investigators. The information revealed from items on display and records at Vietnamese war museums in Hanoi, Vinh and other cities in Vietnam has been of great assistance to the efforts to account for our missing Navy members, according to Manor. On personal visits to the families, Navy POW/MIA officers recently presented four of the photos recovered from the archives.

Sorting out the details of incidents that happened over 20 years ago is

JTF-FA searchers explore a steep hillside in Savannakhet Province, Laos People's Democratic Republic.

not an easy task. One of the photographs recovered from the archives was incorrectly labeled by the Vietnamese, according to the family members. In this same loss, the remains of one of the crew members was originally incorrectly identified as the bombardier navigator (BN) but eventually determined to be those of the pilot. Navy Casualty will continue to work with other agencies on this case until discrepancies are resolved.

Both LCdr. Manor and Lt. Stothard have recently had the difficult task of personally returning to families several personal items brought back from Vietnam. Although some personal effects have been retrieved from the archives, most have been recovered during investigations and excavations in Southeast Asia. "Regardless of the condition, we find that the families still want the items. In the past year, we have returned to families a helmet bag, an aviator's kneeboard notebook, a religious medallion, several ID cards, a California driver's license and a fiancee's high school ring," Manor added.

When remains are recovered and turned over, a formal repatriation ceremony is performed in Vietnam. At CILHI, anthropologists analyze the remains to ensure that they are consistent with details of the loss; e.g., race, age, sex and stature are determined when possible. The identification process then begins, with dental records and x-rays still used as the primary identification means. Teeth with restorations or fillings are the most useful in identifications. Using a CILHI data base containing the specifics of the dental records of all Vietnam losses, lab staff enter the data on the recovered teeth to compare restoration and tooth location and develop a list of all candidates for identification, from most likely to least likely.

In the absence of dental remains, CILHI sometimes resorts to identification through DNA (deoxyribo nucleic acid) comparison. This is a relatively new method of identification, and to date, one Navy case has been resolved through DNA analysis. According to LCdr. Manor, the Navy currently has five cases pending DNA identification. Because of the condition of the remains from Southeast Asia, DoD relies on matching the MtDNA (mitochondrial DNA) from the remains with the MtDNA of maternal blood relatives. The process is a long one because of the difficulty of extracting and sequencing DNA from remains that are over 20 years old and because there are only three laboratories in the U.S. equipped to perform this work.

"We have one case for which the next of kin could find no living maternal relatives that fit the criteria for MtDNA identification," Manor said. "I asked the widow if she could go through her husband's personal belongings for anything to help us. To our good fortune, she found a lock of his baby hair from his first haircut, which his mother had kept in an album and passed on to him. She also discovered an electric razor with beard clippings that had been sent back with his personal effects. Those samples were used by laboratory personnel to assist in an identification."

A new program currently in its infancy will preclude the services from having to contact the families of future casualties for blood samples for identification. The services are in the process of obtaining blood samples from all active duty members to be kept in a DoD DNA repository in Reston, Va., where they will be maintained for 50 years. Samples on all active duty members are expected to be collected by 1999, with high-risk personnel, such as aviators and SEALs (sea-air-land team members), receiving priority.

BuPers POW/MIA Affairs goes to great lengths to obtain answers for families. "One of our most difficult and compelling cases, involved the loss of LCdr. James Kelly Patterson over North Vietnam," recalled LCdr. Manor. Lt. Stothard, Manor's assistant at BuPers, vigorously pursued answers for the family. When the Vietnamese provided witness statements concerning the BN's death, their location contradicted U.S. records by seven miles. Patterson, who suffered a broken leg as a result of his egress, could not have traversed the seven miles of rough terrain. "Through the efforts of Lt. Stothard and analysts at the [DPMO], we were able to compare imagery of the area with a photograph taken by the wingman of the aircraft as it was about to impact. DPMO analysts produced photographs that would enable even a layman to determine the correct location of the crash. LCdr. Patterson's next of kin will view this new evidence in January. While this aircrew's loss has not been resolved, we hope some of the family's questions will be answered," Manor added.

JO1(SW) Eric S. Sesit

Members of POW/MIA Affairs of the Casualty Branch at BuPers:: Marian Dempski, LCdr. Jeff Manor and Lt. Geoff Stothard.

Over the past year, the BuPers POW/MIA office has been involved in providing information to the families of nine Navy members unaccounted for from a Laos loss in 1969. The OP-2E *Neptune* lost in this incident was shot

Lt. Paul Daley

LCdr. Patterson and his pilot ejected from their A-6 shortly before this picture was taken. The photograph was used to help determine the location of the crash site.

down while dropping sensors in the jungles of Laos. The sensors were used by U.S. surveillance personnel to target Vietnamese night logistic movements. Although probably not the optimum platform for the mission because of the modified P-2's slow speed and lack of maneuverability, it was chosen for its ability to drop the sensors with pinpoint accuracy. For nearly four months, Observation Squadron 67 received little opposition from the North Vietnamese forces. Perhaps the Vietnamese perceived little threat from an aircraft that never bombed them and felt that giving away their positions was a greater threat to their safety. The squadron lost three aircraft in a short period (20 of the Navy's unaccounted for), and the mission for the OP-2E was discontinued.

One of the squadron's aircraft was the subject of a recent excavation effort. Over 60 days were spent on site by the JTF-FA and CILHI recovery teams during four separate recovery periods. In addition to thousands of pieces of aircraft wreckage, the recovery teams retrieved numerous personal items.

A woman's high school ring found at the crash site was in good enough condition that the name of the school and the initials on the band could be read. After reading an account of the recovered ring in a report passed to her by the Navy Casualty Office, the member's mother called to inform the Navy that the ring had belonged to her son's fiancee. In a touching letter, the fiancee described what the ring meant to her. CILHI was able to determine that the Navy member was not able to exit the aircraft. This and other evidence enabled CILHI to resolve this loss for all of the families of the nine unaccounted for Navy members.

On 10 November 1993, the Pentagon released nearly all U.S. military records related to missing Americans in Vietnam. The Department of Defense announced that an estimated 1.5-million pages of documents concerning POW/MIAs from the Vietnam War had been declassified and made public, including Pentagon reports on interviews with refugees from Southeast Asia, information provided by former POWs and other related subjects. The documents have been provided to the Library of Congress, where they are being indexed and put on microfilm; approximately 25,000 to 30,000 documents have been completed so far. These documents are in addition to a huge body of U.S. government Vietnam POW/MIA records that were declassified as a result of an Executive Order issued by President Bush in 1992, which are available at the National Archives in Washington, D.C., and the federal records facility in Suitland, Md.

"There are several networks out there to help the families of our unaccounted for. The National League of Families of Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia is the largest of the groups solely dedicated to helping the families of Vietnam Conflict missing. Additionally, the National Alliance of Families welcomes families of those unaccounted for from all wars, former prisoners of war and concerned citizens. There is also an organization being formed for the families of those unaccounted for from the Korean War," added Manor.

While much of the work being accomplished to account for missing U.S. service members centers around the Vietnam Conflict, there has been a significant increase in the efforts to find answers to those unaccounted for from Korea and the cold war. A joint U.S.-Russian commission has been working steadily for over a year researching U.S. and Russian archives to determine if any of our missing turned up in the prison camps of the former Soviet Union.

"Navy POW/MIA Affairs has provided information concerning unaccounted for Navy members from the cold war as it has been received and has responded to numerous calls and letters from the families of those lost in the fifties and sixties," according to Captain M. S. Debien, Director of the Personal, Family, and Community Support Division at BuPers. "The Senate Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs [which issued its report in January 1993] really brought this issue to the forefront," she said.

Recent progress in talks between the U.S. and North Korea may result in the repatriation of many of the remains of U.S. service members lost during the Korean War. The Navy has 325 unaccounted for from that war.

As a result of a proclamation signed by President Clinton, the 15th POW/MIA Recognition Day was held in September 1993. The origins of this symbolic day has its roots in the efforts of the various organizations seeking answers concerning our unaccounted for from the Vietnam Conflict. The purpose of the day has always been to demonstrate U.S. commitment to obtaining answers for those families awaiting information. Additionally, it honors all former American POWs as well as those service personnel and civilians who are still missing and unaccounted for as a result of serving our nation.

Navy POW/MIA Affairs at BuPers continues to provide service to those families whose loved one did not return from Vietnam. "We will be here for the families to assist in any way possible," said LCdr. Manor, "till they come home." ■

Many thanks to Capt. Debien and LCdr. Manor for their substantial contributions to this article.

A fiancee's high school class ring inscribed with the initials "ALD" was discovered at the crash site in Laos. The ring helped investigators determine the fate of one unaccounted for.

JO1(SW) Eric S. Sesit

A departing gift from a child to an aviator father? Perhaps, but we may never know. Although uncovered at a crash site, the passage of time has prevented an answer.

RAdm. Riley Mixson Retires

The following is the text of RAdm. Mixson's farewell speech (introduction omitted) presented at a ceremony in the Pentagon Auditorium on 22 November 1993.

An A-4E prepares to launch from Oriskany (CVA 34).

I passed the baton of Director, Air Warfare, to RAdm. Brent Bennitt prior to this ceremony. I feel very good about the future of Naval Aviation with Brent in this job, and the support of Diane, his bride, and all of you in this auditorium.

As I reflect over the past 35 years, I can only say what a rich and rewarding experience this has been. No other career could have been more satisfying. A career that has provided me and my family the opportunities to experience the world, meet so many important people, both in this country and abroad, engage in events that have literally changed the course of world history and experience the greatest reward of all – living, working and flying with some of the most honorable and courageous people this world has to offer.

I can honestly say I would not change one thing in my career as a naval officer, except for one particular social I attended.

I must confess that as a result of that social my expectations have recently changed somewhat. But then, there is something we must always remember about expectations ... something that Thomas Dewey learned when he ran for president against Harry Truman back in 1948. On election night he looked like a sure winner, and he asked his wife, "How will it be to sleep with the President of the United States, my dear?" She replied, "A high honor, and quite frankly, darling, I'm looking forward to it." Next morning, at breakfast, after Dewey's defeat, Mrs. Dewey looked across the table and said, "Tell me, Tom, am I going to Washington or is Harry coming here?"

Those who have stood in the arena, and that includes many in this audience, fully comprehend the significance of that statement. I'm most fortunate in that I have the example of leaders, both senior and junior to me, who have set such fine examples in handling adversity in their own lives. After all, life is not always a bed of roses when you live in the fast lane. My wife's daughter, Terry, tells me that when the Lord closes a door, he opens a window. I am already seeing the opportunities ahead, through that window, and my thanks to all of you who are helping to make that happen.

I honestly believe I was born to fly, and to fly as a carrier pilot. From my first victory at sea film as a youngster, I knew my calling. Even when failing my first eye test by a fraction, I prevailed in seeing an optometrist that specialized in eye exercises to correct a slight nearsightedness in my right eye. Every night during my junior year at Vanderbilt I backed away from an eye chart straining my eyes to read smaller and smaller images. I sweated bullets on that eye exam in Pensacola, but passed that time with flying colors.

My first disappointment as a student pilot was not getting jets in advanced training – there were no jet seats available the week I reported in. So like others before me – Stan Arthur, Bud Edney, Hugh Lynch and others – I settled for the S2F, affectionately known as "Stoof," but it had a TAILHOOK, and I eagerly pressed on! My flight instructor, Tom Downing, with us also today, tried to console with the question, "Why on earth would you want to fly an aircraft that's already on fire when it takes off?"

My first assignment was with VS-32 aboard the last straight deck carrier, *Lake Champlain*. Two hundred twenty straight deck landings later, 70 at night – most after night clover leaf patterns in the North Atlantic chasing Soviet submarines – and I was fortunate to qualify as the squadron "paddles" [landing signal officer]. I can tell you I knew a lot about flight discipline and safe operating procedures following those experiences.

After shore duty, including 1,100 hours in the F9F *Cougar*, it was off to NAS Lemoore, Calif.; and the heart of the Vietnam War. Lemoore was an awesome place. Already we had the highest concentration of POW [prisoner of war] wives anywhere in the United States. That statistic prevailed throughout the war, until our POWs came home. In 1968, the year I arrived, the base was abuzz with the lore of our war heroes and the tenacity of our men in prison – names like Jim Stockdale, Bill Lawrence and others – and because we daily saw the hurt in our POW wives and the almost weekly toll on one of our pilots getting shot down, we at Lemoore had an extra zeal to get over there and do our part. That's where I first met Jim Busey, just back from cruise and a Navy Cross winner. He addressed our training class with a seriousness that I remember well to this day – what our mission was and what we ourselves would face. He did not pull any punches and his talk really drove home what Naval Aviation is all about – COMBAT!

That first cruise in A-4Es and the one that immediately followed in A-7Es are full of memories and some traumas – as when someone got killed or taken prisoner – and memories of life-long friendships and love, the kind of love gained by only those who have flown in the face of fire together. There were lots of dark stormy nights and the adrenalin rush of antiaircraft fire, SAMs [surface-to-air missiles] and night carrier landings. But the most prevailing memory is that of leaders with integrity: Wes McDonald shaking each airman's hand at 0300 on the Cubi pier, as we boarded *Oriskany* to

head home; of Hutch Cooper, Yankee Station commander and his obvious love for his aircrews; and on my second combat cruise of Obie Oberg, CO of *Kitty Hawk*, and Paul McCarthy, my squadron CO. These men taught their followers the right stuff, and their lessons became indelibly etched and profoundly reinforced, flying from the decks on Yankee Station.

And then the next war came along. I was fortunate in the intervening years to have the leadership of warriors like Hunt Hardisty, Bill Ramsey, Jack Baldwin and Jonathan T. Howe, along with Dave Rogers, the CO of our flagship *Kitty Hawk*, and subsequently when I had command of *Midway* to have Lew Chatham as my battle group commander. I was also fortunate during Desert Storm to have Herb Browne as the CO of my flagship, *John F. Kennedy*, and CAGs like Mike Bowman and JO's like Terry Rains on my combat team. Looking back on Desert Storm now it seems like pretty tame stuff, but those of us who were there will tell you it was high drama as we counted down to war. Casualties were expected to be high – we planned for chemical-biological attacks and an enemy that certainly had the potential to give us one hell of a fight. The attention of all was riveted to the task at hand. Foxhole religion was evident as the attendance in church steadily mounted.

It was during the prelude to combat that I frequently used the words of Vice Admiral Jim Stockdale in talking to our aircrews. Those words are about seizing the moment, doing the right thing, not what's expected in peacetime necessarily, but what is right to get the job done. As many of you know, after repatriation, Admiral Stockdale traveled with the champion San Francisco 49ers and Coach Bill Walsh. In a speech given at Tailhook in October 1988, he talked about how football players are conversationally on the sidelines just like anybody else until an event happens on the field that can make a difference, an event that can literally change the momentum and outcome of a game. He talked of how the entire team instinctively knocks off the chitchat on the sidelines and how every player's attention is riveted to the event at hand. I used those words to talk to the aircrews about opportunities and seizing the event – the moment – to make something happen – to make a difference that might in some small way change the momentum of war.

And when the clarion call came, indelibly etched in my mind is the courage of *your* aircrews as I walked the flight deck that morning of 17 January 1991 at 0100, shaking the hands of those who would soon catapult into the night for the very first missions against Iraq. You could tell by the forced lightheartedness that there was a degree of underlying concern, a wonder if they would survive the night; but there was no doubt in my mind or theirs that each man would do his job courageously and with honor and with love for his Navy and for his country. Naval Aviators would once again be the first into combat, the tip of the spear, paving the way for others to follow.

Well, our young aviators seized the moment as did those who went before them in WW II, Korea, Vietnam, Lebanon and Libya, and they performed magnificently. They returned home as heroes to parades and welcomes such as this country had not seen since WW II.

And then Tailhook '91 came along, only seven months after that stunning victory in southwest Asia. The greatest hurt that I personally continue to feel from that episode is that our young heroes, fresh from Desert Storm, were tainted as with one brush because of the conduct of a few. Then we, all of us, did not step forward to seize the moment either before, during or after Tailhook '91 and, as a result, our Navy is somewhat tarnished.

There is a lesson here, one which cries out to be passed on so that it will never happen again. The lesson for all that follow is that there are boundaries to the prerogatives of leadership. MORAL boundaries. Clausewitz writes that failures of technique and management are tactical shortcomings which can be fixed, but failures of leadership's nerve and character are terminal and catastrophic. The moral forces are order, courage, confidence and cohesion – forces which assure the troops' faith in the integrity of leadership, its dependability to keep consistent standards of right and wrong. Andre Solzenitzen writes in the *Gulag Archipelago* from his bed, a rotting bag of straw, that it was then he realized that which separates good from evil. It is not political systems, he states, or tribal laws or nation, but what's in the human heart. In other words, the heart of a true leader keeps consistent standards of right and wrong and without compromise. That's what those we lead rightfully expect. Correctness on moral issues is the real lesson from Tailhook '91.

However, wings of gold never tarnish. They preserve their luster. For positive examples of leadership one only has to look at how our young men and women have handled adversity. Naval Aviation has not missed a beat as our aircrews continue to hurl themselves off the flight decks into the threatening skies over Bosnia, Iraq, Somalia and await the call to greater crises in the future. You absolutely have to admire their tenacity, their courage, their integrity. They have the right stuff and our nation is fortunate to have men and women of their caliber, ready and willing to accept any risk when the needs of their country so dictate. These young men and women continue in the best traditions, and exude the utmost confidence, courage and loyalty to their service and loyalty to their nation. Because of them and their brothers and sisters in all warfare specialties, this Navy has a bright future, indeed.

Early in my career, a wonderful friend gave me an inscription, layered over the coveted wings of gold. It reads like this: "Many may fly and some are rewarded handsomely, but this emblem means more than flying. It is dearly bought, requires sacrifice to keep, and represents a way of life." I'm proud to be a naval officer and eternally grateful that my warfare specialty has been carrier aviation.

In closing, I want to thank Bill Owens and the N8 band of brothers for the challenges we have together overcome, the opportunities we have seized, and the support and love we have had for one another.

I especially want to thank [my wife] Annette, [and children] Steve and Betsy for their love, understanding and support. Because of their support, I have lived with them the best of lives and we fully intend to make the next years – God willing – equally as rewarding. Thank you all for being here today, and may God bless each and every one of you. ■

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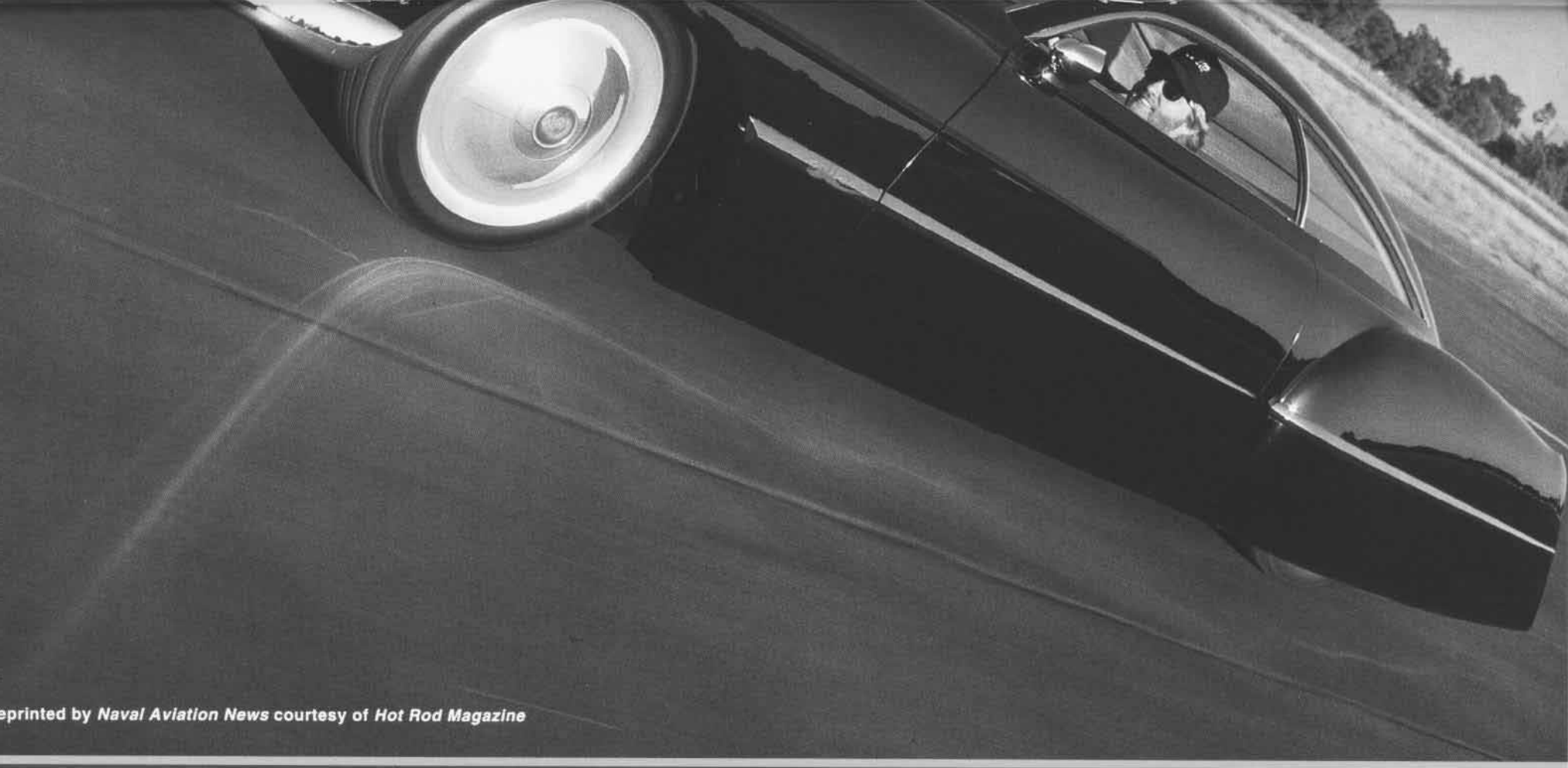

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50 Years of AirLant

By LCdr. Mark Nickelson

Fifty years ago, the Nazi U-boat campaign nearly succeeded in cutting off U.S. support for the war effort in Europe. In the early months of 1943, as Rear Admiral Daniel V. Gallery would later reminisce, "We only stayed ahead of them by launching ships faster than they sank them."

The U.S. war machine was still developing the global effort that would win the war. In the midst of the fast-paced build-up of forces and in the face of the increasingly urgent U-boat threat, the Navy formed Commander Air Force, Atlantic Fleet (AirLant).

Then as now, AirLant was the senior type command for all aviation assets used by the Atlantic Fleet. As the type command, it has provided operationally ready air squadrons and aircraft carriers to the fleet for 50 years. AirLant ensures that Atlantic fleet squadrons and carrier crews are trained and their aircraft and ships are fit for action, backed up by a complex, relentless system of spare parts and maintenance that allows no compromise in safety or readiness.

In 1943, most of the Navy's assets were committed to the fight against the Japanese and the challenge of logistic support across the vast reaches of the Pacific Ocean. Still, the United States and its allies looked to the Navy to fulfill three major missions critical to the war against Nazi Germany: the Navy would mount the amphibious assaults that would carry the war onto the European mainland, sustain the flow of men, food and ordnance across the Atlantic, and suppress the U-boat menace.

The three missions were closely interrelated. If the U-boats could have stopped the convoys, neither the aggressive land campaigns in Italy and France nor the strategic bombing operations from England would have been possible.

AirLant was formed in Norfolk in January 1943 under the flag of Rear Admiral Alva D. Bernhard. The new command was to take the place of three older organizations: Commander Carriers, Atlantic Fleet; Carrier Replacement Squadron, Atlantic Fleet; and Fleet Air Wings, Atlantic. A similar reorganization had produced AirLant's West Coast counterpart, Commander Air Force, Pacific Fleet, three months earlier.

Hampton Roads Naval Museum

The PBY-5 Catalina could fly 12-hour ASW patrols. Beaching gear allows storage and servicing of flying boats ashore.

AirLant's antisubmarine warfare (ASW) patrols staged from stations that literally ringed the Atlantic Ocean: Morocco, Great Britain, Iceland, Newfoundland, Trinidad, Puerto Rico, Brazil and Bermuda. Norfolk, Va.; Key West, Fla.; and Quonset Point, R.I., were key stateside bases. The naval air presence in Jacksonville, Fla., was expanding rapidly. NAS Brunswick, Maine, was newly open for business. Other East Coast facilities existed at New York, N.Y.; Cape May, N.J.; Charleston, S.C.; Boca Chica and Banana River, Fla.; Martha's Vineyard and Squantum, Mass.; Chincoteague, Va.; Weeksville, N.C.; and Glynco, Ga.

Fighting the War

Besides the logistics, maintenance and training duties of a type command, AirLant was ordered to direct all Atlantic air combat operations not assigned to specific task forces – a duty that amounted to prosecuting the war against the U-boats.

The Battle of the Atlantic reached its crisis in March 1943 – an all-time high in destruction of Allied shipping tonnage. One convoy alone lost 22 ships and suffered attacks by three separate wolf packs. At a time when U.S. troops were already in action in North Africa and preparing to invade Sicily, the shipping lanes were almost closed to the Allies.

AirLant helped turn the tide almost immediately. In the summer months, the command recorded nine U-boats sunk by patrol squadrons off France, plus another 16 by the escort carrier hunter-killer groups prowling the sea lanes and escorting the convoys.

The Germans responded tenaciously, fitting out some subs with a saltwater version of the *flakvierling*, their four-barrel, 20mm antiaircraft mount. Then, in the words of AirLant's official WW II history, "Instead of crash diving on approach of an Allied plane, they were remaining on the surface to fight. This necessitated a change in tactics on the part of our aircraft, and made it necessary to increase their forward firepower and their armored protection against fire from ahead. Those changes were accomplished in short

order, and before long the new Nazi tactics were operating to their own disadvantage because they made their submarines more vulnerable to attack." Some of the Navy's first aerial rockets, developed from a British prototype, were among the forward-firing weapons added. All AirLant ASW planes were armed with rockets by the end of 1943.

In January 1944, Patrol Squadron 63, patrolling out of Port Lyautey, Morocco, reported the Straits of Gibraltar effectively closed to Nazi ships during daylight, by patrol bombers equipped with magnetic anomaly detection (MAD) gear.

While the Allies invaded France, the antisubmarine patrolling continued. Then-Captain Dan Gallery has written that he and the staff of the hunter-killer group he led planned specifically to capture a U-boat intact. They caught *U-505* off Africa on June 4, 1944, in circumstances that would support their plan.

Closely covered by planes and destroyers, the crew abandoned ship and surrendered. A boarding party from the hunter-killer group dashed aboard and the submarine was towed to Bermuda. There, technicians discovered demolition charges that would have sent the prize to the bottom but for a malfunction. *U-505* was kept under wraps until the end of the war; today, it can be seen at the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry.

A group of AirLant pilots from the ship-based artillery spotting community made a happy trade of equipment for their contribution to Operation Overload. They swapped their Curtiss SOC-3 *Seagull* biplanes for *Spitfires* and directed naval gunfire covering the Normandy invasion from the nimble British fighters.

AirLant organized a unique aviation unit in July 1944. Called the Special Air Unit, it was designed to go to England and develop techniques to attack German V-1 and V-2 missile launch sites with remote-controlled bombers filled with high explosives. The Navy technicians in this unit worked with the Army Air Force's small cadre of pioneer researchers in one of the technologies that would eventually produce the intercontinental ballistic missile.

Their efforts to deliver dronefuls of explosives to Nazi targets were not successful, though. One flight actually reached the area of German submarine pens on Helgoland Island but did not strike the target.

An accidental explosion on another drone flight took the life of Lieutenant Joseph Kennedy, Jr., the older brother of a PT boat skipper who would later become president. Joe Kennedy was flying ASW patrols in PB4Y-1s when he volunteered for the experimental mission.

Hampton Roads Naval Museum

Norfolk sailors service a Martin PBM Mariner. At right, a Douglas JD-1 target tug/utility plane awaits its turn.

The costs of war were brought home to AirLant in other ways, as well. During hunter-killer operations, *Block Island* (CVE 21) was torpedoed by a U-boat off the Azores on 29 May 1944. It was the only U. S. carrier lost in the Battle of the Atlantic.

A horrific blast rocked NAS Norfolk on 17 September 1943, when a truckload of aerial depth charges exploded in Hangar V-3. Sixteen sailors were killed and 10 others critically injured. Hanger V-3 and several other buildings were leveled by the blast. Investigating officers concluded that one of the depth charges had apparently exploded after falling off the truck.

From the date of its inception, AirLant contributed heavily to the war in the Pacific. Per the official history, "All new construction carriers in the Navy were trained by AirLant and many escort carriers built on the West Coast were ferried to the East Coast for training and subsequent deployment to the Pacific." In 1944, its year of peak production, AirLant deployed 16 carriers, 20 carrier air groups, 67 carrier-based squadrons, 21 patrol squadrons and 18 aviation units to the Pacific.

The Staff

AirLant operated with innovative, motivated staff support that went far beyond flying and fixing airplanes. The doctors were particularly creative in finding ways to contribute. They inspected the medical departments of new ships during their workups. They set up an informal school for Pharmacist's Mates who would be embarked in Atlantic Fleet destroyers to teach them how to care for hypothermic survivors picked up at sea. They also conducted training in night vision.

A large and active recognition department trained sailors to differentiate between friendly and hostile planes and ships. The recognition staff worked closely with the intelligence department.

The Officers

The early annals of AirLant contain some of Naval Aviation's most famous names. Vice Admiral Patrick N. L. Bellinger, the second officer to command AirLant, was Naval Aviator No. 8 and had several historic first and pioneer flying records to his credit. He assumed the duties of AirLant in March 1943 and was promoted to vice admi-

VAdm. Patrick N. L. Bellinger, ComAirLant, 1943-46.

ral in October 1943. He was ComNavAirLant until 1946. The position has remained a three-star billet ever since.

Captain Daniel V. Gallery commanded *Guadacanal* (CVE 60) and led the operation that captured *U-505* intact. Later promoted to rear admiral, Gallery filled his retirement with a successful publishing career of both fiction and memoirs based on his career as a Naval Aviator.

Fighter aces David McCampbell and James H. Flatley, Jr., commanded units in AirLant in preparation for their deployment to the Pacific, McCampbell, Fighter Squadron 15, and Flatley, Carrier Air Group 8.

Future admirals Felix B. Stump and Thomas L. Sprague commanded aircraft carriers during their workup periods in AirLant – Stump *Lexington* (CV 16) and Sprague *Intrepid* (CV 11).

Rear Admiral A. C. Read, who had led the 1919 pioneer Atlantic crossing of the NC-4, commanded a key AirLant subordinate organization as Commander Fleet Air, Norfolk.

Lieutenant Commander Thomas H. Moorer, who would be Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 1970 to 1974, commanded Bombing Squadron 32.

The Planes

As the type commander, AirLant had cognizance of all the aircraft owned by the Atlantic Fleet as its primary mission. For the most part, keeping them airworthy and combat ready was a matter of following prescribed maintenance, sustaining the flow of spare parts and installing technical modifications or changes required for combat.

But certain types required special attention. The Martin PBM-3 *Mariner*, a large, twin-engine flying boat, was intended to be a mainstay of East Coast ASW patrolling operations. Technical problems with the *Mariner* prompted AirLant to issue a long list of needed modifications and corrections to the airframe, principally to make the plane lighter.

AirLant worked with the Bureau of Aeronautics throughout 1943 to make the *Mariner* serviceable, changing the airframe and its contents and also going through all the engines to install a different type of valve guide. But according to the official history, only with the arrival of a later variant, the PBM-5, did the patrol squadrons have a truly serviceable *Mariner*.

The Curtiss SB2C *Helldiver* was the Navy's other technical pariah of the age. Larger, faster and significantly more modern than the Douglas SBD *Dauntless*, the *Helldiver* nevertheless initially proved unfit for duty. The *Helldiver* was complex and suffered from structural and mechanical system failures during its early carrier operations. The AirLant official history records a no-nonsense solution: the dive-bomber squadrons so urgently needed in the Pacific Fleet – ones that were supposed to deploy with the early *Helldivers* – went to war in *Dauntlesses*.

AirLant Today

On 30 July 1957, the command's title changed to Naval Air Force, Atlantic Fleet. Over the years, the men and planes prepared by AirLant have responded to brushfire wars and political disturbances in Asia, Latin America, Africa and Europe – a litany of global hot spots that starts with the Suez Crisis in 1956 and ends – for now – in Somalia and Bosnia.

Disaster relief missions for victims of floods, storms and earthquakes have also taken AirLant assets into action, along with hurricane early warning flights and recovery of spacecraft at sea.

Today, AirLant comprises 65,300 full-time service personnel and civilians and 22,000 reserves in 101 active aircraft squadrons and 22 reserve squadrons, 7 aircraft carriers, 15 shore stations, 4 reserve air stations and the headquarters organization in Norfolk.

Under the guidance of Vice Admiral Anthony A. Less, AirLant will lead subordinate aircraft type commands in providing fighter, patrol, attack, carrier-based ASW and airborne early warning aircraft, and tactical and ASW helicopters to the fleet.

For over 50 years, AirLant has maintained Naval Aviation's training and readiness for maximum response to regional conflicts all over the world. ■

LCdr. Nickelson is a naval reservist. Ms. Dawn Brennan of the AirLant Public Affairs Office also contributed to this article.

Lockheed PV-1 Venturas were among the land-based patrol planes used in ASW operations.

The Jolly Rogers with the White House Touch

By LCdr. Bob Frantz

Commanders John Stufflebeem, CO, and Brad Goetsch, XO, described it as "nothing more than the luck of the draw – unusual but strictly a coincidence." When the two fighter pilots assumed command responsibility for Fighter Squadron (VF) 84 on 6 November 1992, both reported to the *Jolly Rogers* after serving as Naval Aide and Military Aide, respectively, to the President and Vice President of the United States.

Cdr. Goetsch explained that the presidential and VP staffs have little day-to day interaction, but he and Stufflebeem spent time together when accompanying President Bush and Vice President Quayle at meetings at Camp David, Md.

Goetsch, a 1976 University of Colorado graduate, commissioned through the Aviation Officer Candidate program, never aspired to the aide job and was surprised when he was invited to apply for it. The F-14 pilot and Top Gun graduate reflected, "I was determined to remain in the cockpit and was set to go over to VF-43 as the adversary squadron's ops officer. I wanted to be one of those guys that flies the F-16 with his hair on fire.

"However, I was strongly advised by [my superiors] that I already had the operational tickets; my career needed balance and joint duty is where I should be headed," Goetsch said. So, he was off to a Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) assignment as a joint operations officer working for Lieutenant General Tom Kelly, who would soon gain fame as the JCS Desert Storm press briefer.

"The job was exciting, but demanding. We were with the Joint Chiefs in the 'tank' and frequently briefed White House and Pentagon officials. The pace and hours were insane. When the invitation to apply for the aide job came in, I was enthusiastic," he stated.

"It's incredibly interesting and exciting to see the inside workings of the White House, to travel to half the countries in the world, to meet heads of state and see how they live. And, with your family, being able to take advantage of all the cultural attractions in Washington, D.C., is terrific.

Goetsch continued, "You have more personal contact with the vice president than I expected. As a military aide, you're looked upon as neutral and unbiased – someone who can provide a break in the highly charged political action for the VP. On the road, you're frequently the guy who wakes him up, handles his messages, goes jogging with him and, often, the last person to see him at night. You can't help but get to know each other personally. My family and I were treated very kindly during my tour as aide.

"You do make some sacrifices. You travel constantly and are on call 24 hours a day.

But Goetsch emphasized, "No question, the opportunity was fantastic and I'm convinced it, as well as my experience at JCS, will prove to be career enhancing."

Unusual, even unique are adjectives that describe John Stufflebeem's career. A white hat for two years prior to his acceptance to the Naval Academy, Stufflebeem was talented enough as a Navy football player that upon graduation, he was signed to a National Football League contract by the Detroit Lions.

Initially a surface officer, Stufflebeem was on the Lions' military reserve list and when his naval career allowed, played as a punter and backup tight end during the 1975, 1977 and 1979 seasons. Son of a Naval Aviator, he gave up football – which he admits was a "heady experience" – when the opportunity to enter flight training and pursue his long-term goal of becoming a Navy fighter pilot presented itself.

After completing his initial operational tour as an F-14 *Tomcat* pilot in VF-211, Stufflebeem was selected for adversary pilot duty with NAS Oceana, Va.-based VF-43. While there, he became one of the handful of Americans ever to fly in Israel with the Israeli Air Force, because "in 1984, the Navy was in the process of leasing the F-21 *Kfir* from Israel to help us replicate the supersonic performance and tactics of

potential enemy fighters."

In 1989, after sea duty with VF-102, he was selected from among six officers nominated to be Naval Aide to President Bush.

Stufflebeem described the duties: "The job includes sharing responsibility with the other military aides for the president's emergency satchel, known as the football. I was also one of five ops officers in the 3,300-person White House Military Office and Aide De Camp or back-up personal aide for the president. And, of course, being a ceremonial aide at state dinners and the like is part of the job.

"You are in close personal contact with the president. During the Christmas 1989 capture and arrest of Noriega and the liberation of Panama, I was with President Bush and his family at Camp David during the very intense seven days.

"During time off, my family and I were invited to accompany the president and his family on some of their vacations. I was honored and flattered by the kindness and friendship extended to me by the president. And that friendship continues today," Stufflebeem added.

The White House experience of these two Naval Aviators continues to pervade their careers. When President Clinton made his first major military visit during his presidency, he chose *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71) for that purpose. Aboard the nuclear carrier, as Carrier Air Wing 8's only embarked F-14 squadron, were the *Jolly Rogers* of VF-84. Not surprisingly, the "White House touch" of Commanders Goetsch and Stufflebeem was called upon once again. ■

LCdr. Frantz is a reservist who drills with VF-84; he provides public affairs support to the fighter community on both coasts.

Enlisted Aviation Series

Aircrew Survival Equipmentman

Story and Photos by JO1(SW) Eric S. Sesit

Sewing! I love it. That's the main reason I wanted to be a PR (Aircrew Survival Equipmentman)," PR3 Mark J. Kilmer exclaimed as he threaded the needle on his industrial strength Singer.

PR2 Jay Navis disagrees. "If I had known that I would be using a sewing machine, I definitely would have enlisted in a different rating. I didn't have a clue I'd be learning to sew until I got to "A" school," Navis said. Both men are assigned to the Aviation Intermediate Maintenance Department (AIMD) at Naval Air Facility, Washington, D.C.

"Sewing is really just a small part of what we do," PRCS(AW) Joe E. Hollern, the PR detailer said. "It's an important part of our job but not the major function."

"Our job is to inspect, maintain and repair survival equipment," Kilmer said. "Every piece of survival gear is on an inspection cycle. Whether it's a 30, 60, 90 or 180-day cycle, each item is inspected and accounted for. Keeping track of an entire squadron's survival gear is a time-consuming and difficult task."

Originally known as Parachute Riggers, the 1,800 Navy PRs learn how to maintain and track this gear at an A school at Naval Air Technical Training Center, Millington, Tenn. The Marine Corps trains its 6060s, the Marines Military Occupational Specialty code for survival equipmentmen, at Millington along with the Navy's sailors. For nine weeks, they study the basics of parachute packing, maintaining and repairing floatation equipment, helicopter rescue equipment, oxygen masks, helmets and, yes, sewing.

"The PRs then head out to the fleet as apprentices where they get hands-on training," Hollern said. "They are assigned to ships company, squadrons or an AIMD."

From the time Navy recruits enter boot camp, attention to detail is perhaps the most important lesson taught. Every aviator who climbs into a cockpit depends on the PRs' scrutiny of survival equipment on which they pride themselves.

How many PRs does it take to pack a parachute? "Three," said Kilmer. "Two PRs pack the parachute while one observes the process as a collateral duty inspector. Every time we pack a chute we have the instruction manual open and follow it to the letter. Repetition breeds complacency and, in our business, we just can't afford it."

Checking to make sure all lines are straight, PR3 Mark Kilmer and Marine Sgt. Pamela Schaub demonstrate the proper method of packing a parachute.

An important tool in any PR shop is the sewing machine, which is used for repairs on equipment and parachutes.

Parachutes aren't just folded and packed – each seam and line is meticulously placed and inspected for proper positioning. "When we follow the book, the parachute will open every time," said Marine Sgt. Pamela Schaub, a 6060 working at NAF Washington.

Although the PR rating has changed as new technologies have developed, bigger changes are emerging on the horizon. Navy Enlisted Classification (NEC) codes, which are assigned upon completion of schools or special training, have never been available in the PR rating. In the coming months, an NEC and a possible rating merger are very real possibilities.

According to Hollern, "The NEC will only be available to E-5 through E-7 "C" school graduates. The C school [also at Millington] covers overhaul, test and repair of oxygen regulator bottle stands and overhaul and repair of sewing machines. In 1987, aviation breathing oxygen analyses was incorporated into the curriculum, and this is the crucial element of the NEC. PRs must apply to their detailer for the NEC; it's not automatically given. We will grandfather the requirements to January 1987."

Rumors of combining the PR rating with the Aviation Structural Mechanic-Safety Equipment (AME) rating have been around for a long time. "In 1978, serious consideration was given to the merger but, at the time, funding was not available to make the change," Hollern said. "In 1982, the merger was again brought up but was not considered cost-effective because the Navy was building up. The proposal was shot down again in 1987. Now the merger looks like it will become reality."

The new rating will be called Aviation Life Support Equipmentman (AL). The AL training manual has been written and a proposal is being readied for the Bureau of Personnel's approval. "The merger will be implemented over a three-year period beginning in 1996. Fleet indoctrination teams will deploy fleet wide to help sailors with the cross rating," Hollern said.

"I want to emphasize that this is not a done deal," Hollern continued. "However, as of now, everyone, including the community planners for the PRs and the AMEs, thinks this is a good plan and would like to see it happen."

The results of the merger will greatly benefit PRs. Since ejection seats and oxygen systems are different in each type of aircraft, AMEs can qualify for several NECs. The rating merger will enable PRs to qualify for these skills. The results will mean a rating which is driven by specialities, or NECs, for assignments. Promotion opportunities will also increase as the combined community grows.

"The biggest benefit of the merger to the Navy and to the troops is that they will become better, well-rounded sailors," Hollern stated.

For now, PR is a good career rating. Currently manned at 92 percent, advancement remains steady. Thirty-seven sailors advanced to E-6, 18 to E-5 and 32 to E-4 after the September 1993 advancement exam. According to Hollern, the promotion rate should continue to improve as the force stabilizes.

PRs can expect to spend 50 percent of their Navy career at sea. Third-class petty officers spend their entire first tour or 48 months in a sea billet before serving 48 months on shore. Second and first-class petty officers spend 45 months at sea and 42 and 36 months, respectively, on shore. Chiefs split their sea/shore time at 42 months each, and senior and master chiefs spend 36 months at sea and 36 months on shore duty.

PRs don't do the glamorous work. Unless you're bailing out of an aircraft and praying for your chute to open, you probably don't appreciate their skills. But when the chips are down and your aircraft is heading that way, also, your life depends on survival equipment. You can be thankful that the PRs take pride in their work.

"I've only had one case where a chute I packed was used," Schaub said. "A *Hornet* pilot had to eject. It was a good feeling knowing that my work had saved his life, but it's not something you dwell on. It's just part of the job."

"These are exciting times for our junior people," concluded Hollern. "They shouldn't get frustrated with the changes that are occurring in the Navy. In 10 years, these junior people will be the senior and master chiefs. There is plenty of opportunity out there." ■

The 70th PR reunion will be held 18-24 September 1994 at Naval Air Technical Training Center, Millington, Tenn. For more information, contact PRCS Knowles or PRC Unrein, 901-873-7670.

A Kid's-eye View:

By Chad H. Harvey

When I was 11 years old, I sailed on a special voyage aboard the aircraft carrier *Midway* with my older brother, Barry, and my father. Barry is a first class petty officer in the Navy. The three of us went on a four-day, father-and-son "Tiger" cruise, from Seattle, Wash., to San Diego, Calif. It was the last time *Midway* was operational at sea, because after San Diego the ship went back to Seattle to be decommissioned. Decommission is also called "to put a ship in moth balls," which means they take all the useful things off the ship, seal it up and dock the ship permanently.

All the men in our family have been sailors. My father, Charles, was a seaman in the Navy and an able-bodied seaman in the merchant marines. His brother, my Uncle Herb, was a navigator in the merchant marines. My brother Chuck E. was in the Navy for four years. They claim they have sailed "up one side of the world and down the other." My mom says I should go to Annapolis, so we could have a captain in the family. After sailing on a great ship like *Midway*, I know I will join the Navy someday.

First, we flew from Philadelphia, Pa., where we live, to Seattle. I had never been on an airplane before, so I was excited, but it was a long trip. To help pass the time, we read about the history of *Midway* from a Navy publication Barry had sent us that was issued to celebrate the 45th anniversary of the carrier.

On 9 September 1991, the captain welcomed us on board *Midway*. He gave us all hats and T-shirts that read: "Tiger Cruise."

I didn't know a ship was so huge – four acres on the flight deck alone, like a floating city! Barry, who had been on board during Desert Storm, has his own office. He is a Machinist's Mate. He is in charge of leading a crew of sailors that lift the planes from the hangar bay to the flight deck.

Barry told us that there was only one thing he couldn't get on the West Coast that he missed. So, before we left home, we stopped at Delansandos' in Roxborough, Pa. They wrapped up eight Philadelphia cheese steaks with onions. We put them in a special container, so Dad could carry them on the plane. Barry put them in a microwave. The steak sandwiches were all devoured by Barry and his cabin mates in a few minutes. Barry's friends are real cool. Dad says it's all right for them to use bad language on the ship because they are sailors, but I am not supposed to pick up any of the words.

At sea we traveled at 28 knots heading south from Seattle. The weather was calm but foggy. We slept in the same room with four other men in Barry's group. We slept on racks (beds). My father made me sleep in the lowest rack in case the rolling of the ship caused me to fall out. (I didn't.)

Wednesday, 11 September, was pizza day. We all ate in the crew's mess hall at the first class table. Barry introduced us to more of his crew. Barry was their boss and they were very respectful to him. One sailor, named Taylor, was not much taller than me. He was funny and kept saying he would beat me up. Barry and his crew worked hard all the time taking different shifts both day and night.

That night, we had a party in a large

Opposite page: The author's brother, Barry, waves to the camera as Chad looks on. Left: Chad and father Charles pose on the flight deck with an FA-18. Above: MM1 Barry Harvey and brother Chad demonstrate the importance of hearing protection aboard a noisy carrier.

The Last Voyage of Midway

area next to Barry's office. The party was for a guy who reenlisted for four more years. Barry tried to play my saxophone, but he has never had lessons. I played three songs and ended with "Anchors Away." The guys all laughed at Barry and clapped for me. The captain came to the party, too, and I shook hands with him. It was 2238 (10:38 p.m.) before I was able to hit my rack.

On Thursday, 12 September, we saw airplanes taking off from the ship's deck. It was hard for me to see, so Barry lifted me up to his shoulders. We had a late muster (meeting) on the flight deck about the *Hornet*. "It is a plane built around a computer," the man said. We got to see the controls in the *Hornet*. My father says it's no wonder the United States is the most powerful nation in the world, no one else has ships and planes as advanced as we do.

On Friday, we saw a practice air show. There were two parts of the show that were my favorites. First, when three planes dropped about 30 bombs in a row, the bombs made the ocean splash with gigantic waves. My second favorite part was a surprise. A jet plane came right overhead at supersonic speed. We did not hear it until it was far away. But when it broke the sound barrier, we didn't just hear it, we felt it through the deck.

Also, a group of important people came on board *Midway* for the air show. They included the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell, and several NATO leaders. There was a big ceremony talking about how great *Midway* had been to the Navy. Chairman Powell said, "The air show was very, very impressive. I'm sure that every sailor and Marine who ever sailed on *Midway* is here with us today, in spirit, on this last day at sea." My Dad said that it was important to remember, *The "Midway* sailed for war, but she also sailed for lasting peace."

The next morning, with the demonstration over and the VIPs gone, the 70,000-ton *Midway* kicked up its speed to 30 knots and pulled into San Diego in the biggest homecoming ever.

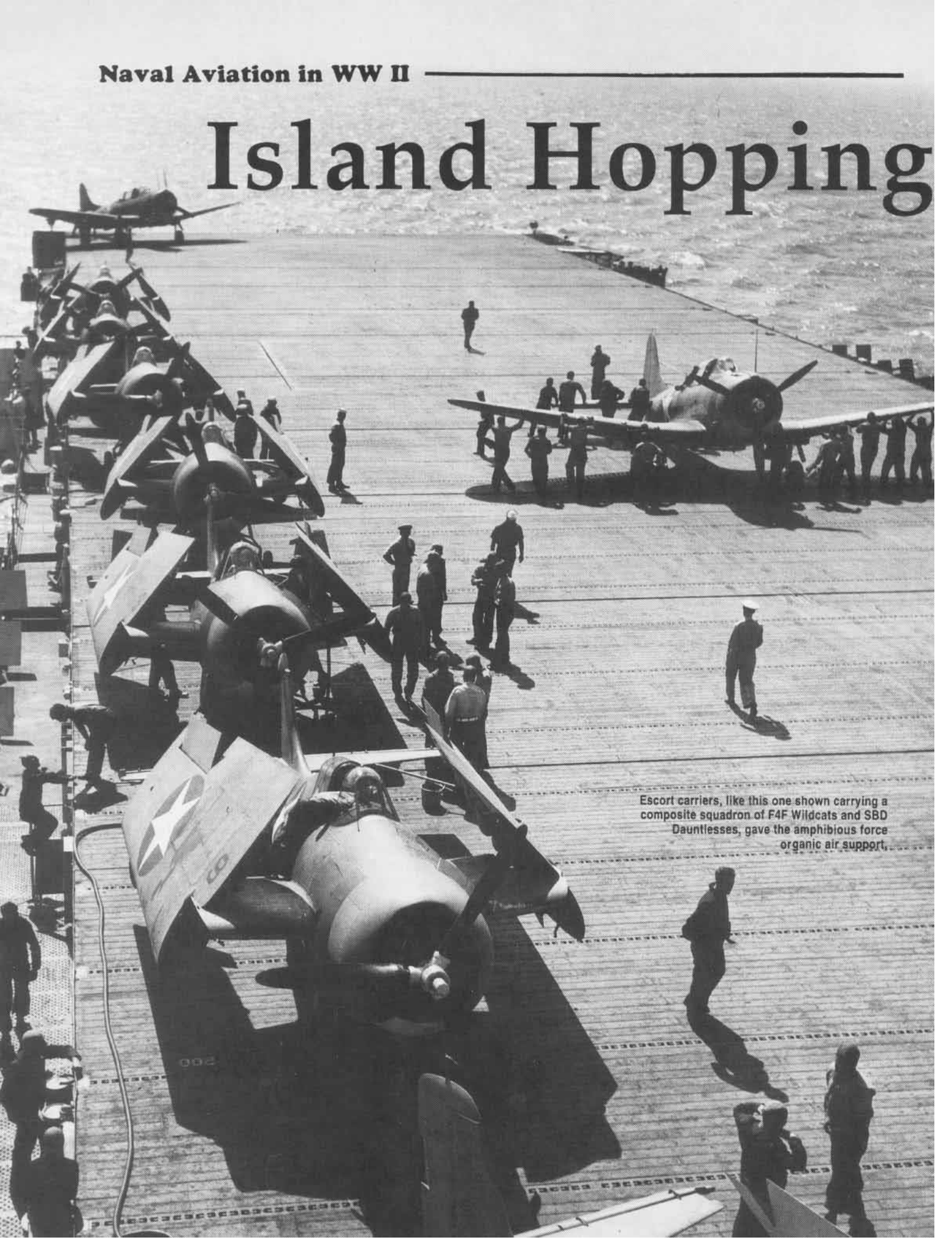
Barry and all the ship's sailors put on their dress white uniforms and stood along the deck rails, which is called "manning the rails." It was a very warm day and the sky was deep blue. The ship's band played as we sailed into the dock.

We said goodbye to Barry's friends. Taylor gave me a red Desert Storm T-shirt, with an eagle, a map of the Persian Gulf and a picture of *Midway* on it.

When we got off the ship, people were crying and hugging. There were lots of people carrying signs with sailor's names on them. Many of the sailors were from San Diego. One sailor, who was met by his wife and little boy said, "It's good to be home again. It's been so long. It's nice to see friendly eyes again." Another sailor said, "We were hoping for a turn out like this morning. When we came home from Yokosuka to Hawaii and to Seattle, for me, that's not home. For me, home is California – San Diego."

Barry went with us to the airport. We shook hands and said goodbye. I slept on the plane almost all the way home. When we got back to Philadelphia, Mom had balloons and a "Welcome Home" sign. I'm glad to be home, but I still think the Tiger cruise was the best voyage I've ever had! ■

Island Hopping



Escort carriers, like this one shown carrying a composite squadron of F4F Wildcats and SBD Dauntlesses, gave the amphibious force organic air support.

in WW II

From the Gilberts to the Marshalls

By John C. Reilly

The offensive in the southwest Pacific, beginning with the landings on Guadalcanal and Tulagi in August 1942, continued through 1943 as Allied strength built up. Ships, planes, troops and bases multiplied as the front was pushed toward Rabaul.

The early campaigns taught valuable lessons. Aviators gave particular attention to tactics, including ground-air liaison procedures and communications.

Prewar strategic planning had called for a naval offensive across the island groups of the central Pacific, aimed at the Philippines and Japan. General Douglas MacArthur, Allied commander in the southwest Pacific, felt that the main effort should, instead, continue past Rabaul and along New Guinea to the Philippines.

Early in 1943, the Army and Navy laid their ideas before the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who approved a two-prong concept. The southwest Pacific offensive would continue, but the new central Pacific thrust would become the main avenue of attack while northern Pacific forces operated against the Japanese in the Aleutians. Admiral Ernest J. King and General George C. Marshall discussed this with the British at Casablanca in January 1943, assured them that this would not drain resources needed in Europe and won their assent. The overall strategic plan was blessed by British and American commanders in Washington in May of that year.

This unprecedented campaign across thousands of miles of nearly empty ocean would have to be spearheaded and supported by a powerful force of aircraft carriers. By the end of 1942, the first of the new *Essex*-class fleet carriers (CV) and *Independence*-class small carriers (CVL) were being commissioned to join *Saratoga* and *Enterprise*, the only surviving prewar carriers in the Pacific Fleet. A number of small escort carriers (CVE), converted from merchant hulls, were in service, and a large number of "keel-up" CVEs were on their way.

Admiral Chester Nimitz, commander of what was now called the Pacific Ocean Area, formed the Central Pacific Force in August 1943, with Admiral Raymond Spruance in command. Spruance's spearhead was the Fast Carrier Force. This was organized into task groups, each group containing three to five fast carriers, screened by fast battleships, cruisers and destroyers to provide antisubmarine and anti-aircraft protection. The Fast Carrier Force was the fleet's long-range striking arm, designed to run interference for the fleet's Amphibious Force. Each landing operation would be opened by strikes at Japanese bases within flying range of the objective and on the target islands themselves. Carrier planes would support the initial landings, and the carriers would then fight off any possible Japanese counterattacks. The Carrier Force and Amphibious Force were backed up by the Service Force, a mobile logistic force of tenders, floating dry docks and underway replenishment ships whose mission was to keep the fleet at sea. By 1945, the Service Force was even delivering replacement planes and aircrews to the carriers at sea.

In mid-1943, the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed Adm. Nimitz to take the ball in the central Pacific. Prewar plans had looked at the Marshall Islands as the first target, but little was known in 1943 about the strength of their defenses. Planners decided that the fleet was not yet up to the strength and experience needed to take on this largely unknown objective, and the first amphibious operation was aimed at the Gilbert Islands to provide bases for land-based air and vital experience for the largely untested amphibious forces. Fighter and bomber fields were built in the Ellice Islands to attack the Gilberts, and the new carriers were sent to "get their feet wet" by hitting Japanese island bases. Grumman's F6F *Hellcat* saw its first action in a strike on Marcus Island in September 1943; shortly afterward, a raid on the Gilberts led the Japanese to pull nearly all their planes back from the Tarawa and Makin atolls. "Lifeguard submarining" was tested in an air-and-gunfire raid on Wake Island, when *Skate* gave course information to incoming carrier planes and rescued six flyers from the water under fire. The CO of the cruiser *Minneapolis* reported that "both air power and ship-based gun power in great quantity" would be needed to overcome Japanese island defenses, and even then any landing would be strongly resisted and would exact a heavy price from the attackers. He was right on both counts.

The Gilberts operation opened in mid-November 1943 as Army B-24 *Liberator* bombers from the Ellices attacked Tarawa. Land-based Army, Navy and Marine Corps planes continued to hit targets in the Gilberts and Marshalls as the naval task forces converged on Tarawa and Makin. The attack was led by Rear Admiral Charles

Pownall's Task Force (TF) 50, four task groups numbering six CVs and five CVLs armed with *Hellcat*s, SBD *Dauntless*es and TBF *Avenger*s; the carrier *Bunker Hill* was introducing Curtiss SB2C *Helldiver*s to the war. Eight "jeep carriers" were assigned to support the amphibious force.

One of TF 50's task groups launched repeated attacks on the Marshalls during the last days before the landings and helped the escort carriers cover the Gilberts, smashing two Japanese air attacks from Marshall Island bases. Another task group pounded Makin before and during the landing, while a third group did the same to Tarawa. The fourth task group struck the Japanese air base on Nauru, taking it out of the Gilberts operation, and then flew air cover for troop convoys following the invasion force. Land-based planes out of the Ellices reconnoitered the Gilberts area throughout the approach and kept up the pressure on targets in the Gilberts and Marshalls.

The assault forces were aimed at the Abemama, Tarawa and Makin atolls. Abemama, nearly undefended, was captured by a raiding party. Makin was fairly easily captured by Army troops, but a submarine torpedo detonated a bomb magazine in the escort carrier *Liscome Bay*, sending her to the bottom with two-thirds of her crew.

By the opeening of the central Pacific offensive, the Grumman F6F Hellcat had replaced the F4F Wildcat in the Fast Carrier Force.

A postwar account called Tarawa "the tough nut," and indeed it was. The Japanese had constructed formidable fortifications on the island of Betio, and these were held by some 2,600 naval infantry with 1,000 construction troops. Landing beaches were shielded by coral reefs, mines and obstacles. Planners concluded that most of Betio's defenses would have to be knocked out before the assault waves went in, and pinned their hopes on pre-landing air strikes and short-range battleship and cruiser gunfire.

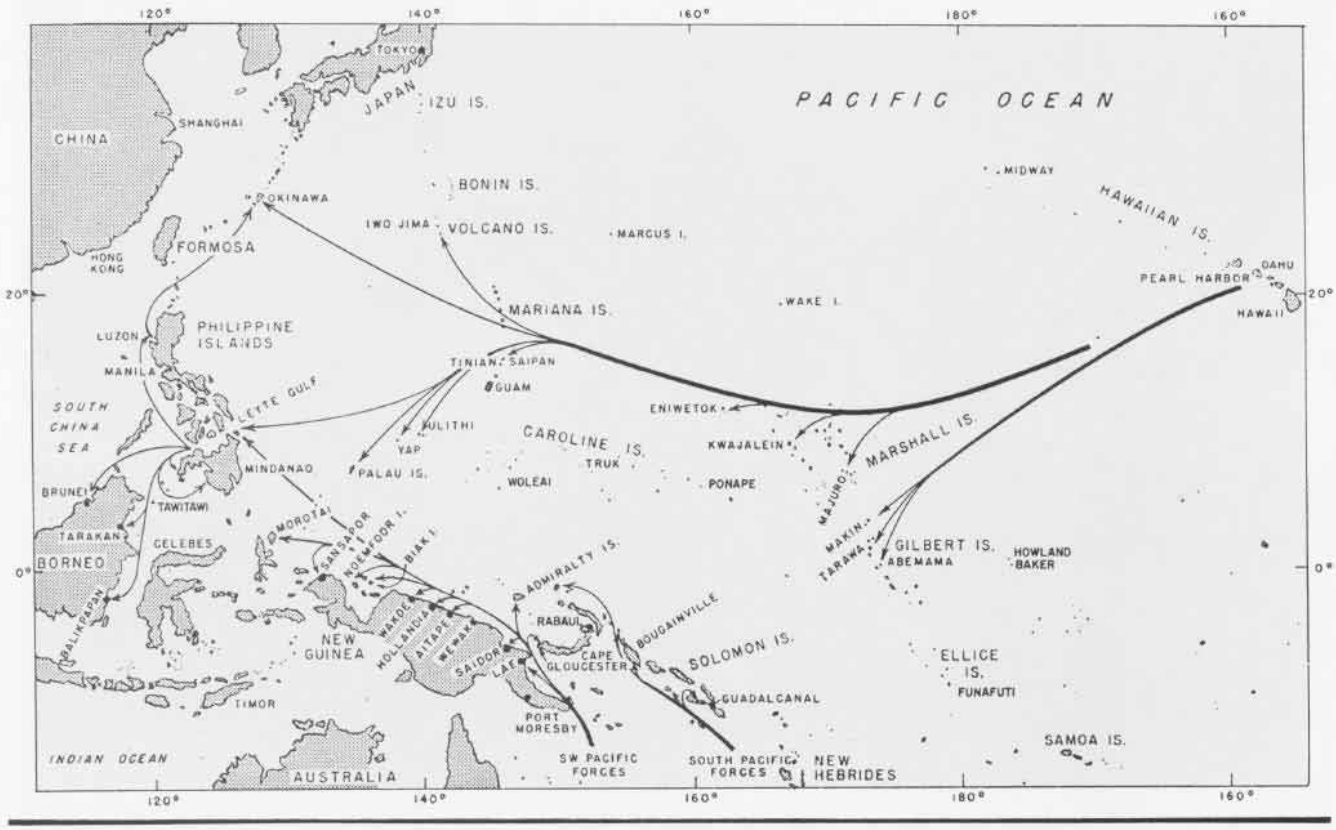
The Navy-Marine concept of close air support got its first real test in the Gilberts. The landing force included liaison parties charged with helping the infantry commanders select suitable targets for air attack and for communicating with the supporting aircraft. Air spotting was provided by experienced pilots who had been thoroughly briefed on the ground plan.

At sunrise on D day, 20 November 1943, carrier planes gave Betio a brief going-over, followed by two and a half hours of naval gunfire. At H hour minus 5 minutes, the gunfire was supposed to lift to allow a final strafing of beach defenses by carrier fighters. Innumerable complications in getting the assault waves formed and going postponed H hour, and a communications glitch kept that word from the carriers; the strafers raked the beaches at the time appointed, but this was now 35 minutes before the new H hour. Dense smoke over the landing area put the assault waves out of sight of bombardment ships while still 15 minutes from the beach, and most gunnery ships had to cease firing. This gave the defenders time to man their guns and reinforce the landing beaches. By the afternoon of 23 November, Tarawa was secured, but at a cost of more than 1,000 lives and 2,000 wounded.

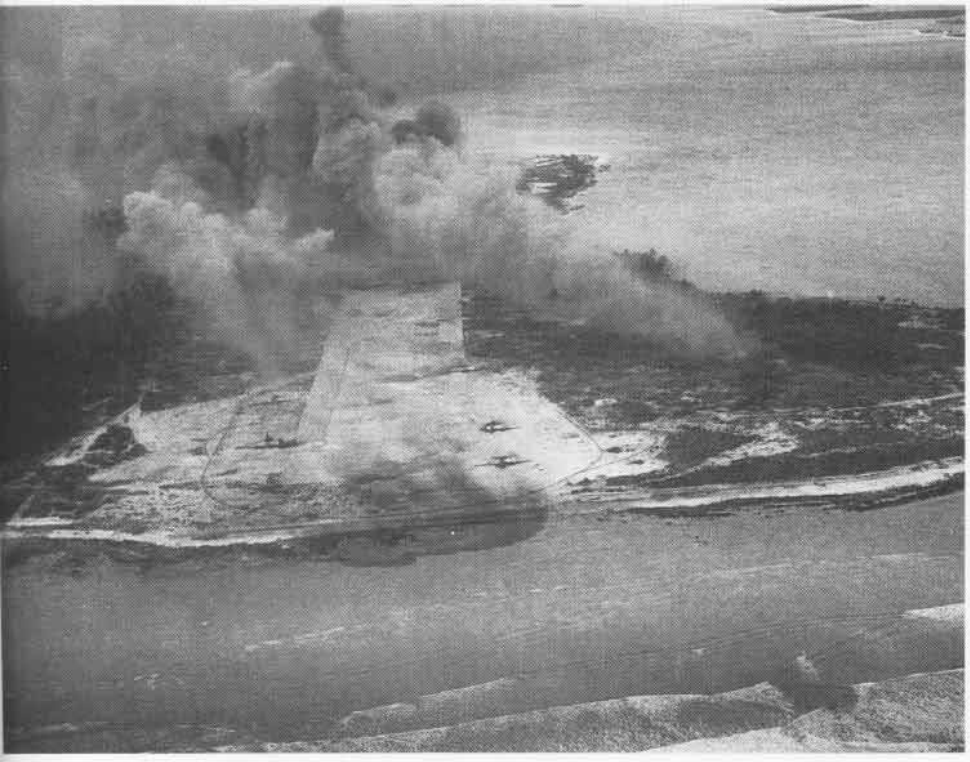
Americans were startled at the toll of this fight for what seemed to be an insignificant speck of ground, but the capture of the Gilberts proved to be the essential first step on the ocean road to Tokyo Bay. The Navy and Marines immediately began to assess Tarawa's bitter lessons as critical reports came in from every level. Brief air and naval bombardments were not enough to defeat strongly fortified objectives; this required prolonged, carefully controlled bombing and shelling with continuing assessment of target damage. Air strikes, gunfire and troop landings had been poorly coordinated, with fatal results. Field radios failed, and Marines ashore could hardly communicate with supporting planes and ships. High-trajectory gunfire, using heavy armor-piercing shells, was seen to be needed to penetrate major fortifications, and close-range saturation fire was judged necessary right up to the time the first waves went ashore.

Though close-support air sorties had produced "good to excellent results," assault landing strikes were criticized. One senior aviator reported that "the carrier squadrons had little concept of their mission in detail and only a rudimentary idea of how to accomplish" it. The amphibious force needed a full-time air commander to help plan all aspects of air support and to control all aircraft in the landing area. Another senior air staff officer later remarked that fast carrier flyers, like Army pilots, thought in terms of air strikes and air-to-air combat; close-support missions were an "irksome" diversion. The CVE pilots, he noted, "soon got in the groove and provided A-1 results," and the "jeeps" would play an increasing role in the history of Pacific island hopping. Reports and analyses of Tarawa were carefully studied by Allied commanders planning the invasion of Europe. They concluded that air and naval fire support would have to be provided on an unheard-of scale if Hitler's "Atlantic Wall" was to be broken. This was carried into the plan for Operation Overlord, and it seems quite likely that the costly experience of Tarawa may have saved the lives of many Allied soldiers and sailors on the other side of the world.

The assault on the Marshalls was being planned well before the Gilberts landings. The first plan prescribed landings on the Kwajalein, Wotje and Maloelap atolls. After Tarawa, Navy and Marine Corps commanders con-



The Fast Carrier Force led the way into the Gilberts and Marshalls, then headed south to support General MacArthur in New Guinea before turning toward the Marianas.



Planes from Langley (CVL 27) rake an Eniwetok airfield during the invasion of the Marshalls, February 1944.

cluded that their resources still did not permit three simultaneous invasions and recommended that Maloelap and Wotje first be taken and turned into bases to support an attack on Kwajalein. Adm. Nimitz caused a stir among his commanders when he opted to bypass the other atolls and take Kwajalein alone, reasoning – correctly, as it proved – that the outer atolls would be more strongly defended. Adm. Spruance got authorization to occupy Majuro Atoll in the eastern Marshalls for an advanced air and fleet base.

Land-based planes from the Ellices and the newly won Gilberts began the attack on the Marshalls early in January 1944. The six CVs and six CVLs of the Fast Carrier Force, now called TF 58 under Rear Admiral Marc Mitscher, arrived on 29 January and hit Japanese airfields on Maloelap, Wotje and Kwajalein while land-based bombers struck Mili and Jaluit. On the 30th, one carrier task group destroyed Japanese aircraft on Eniwetok while the other three kept Kwajalein, Wotje and Maloe-

Lexington (CV 16) Hellcat pilots return from a strike during the Gilberts operation, November 1943.

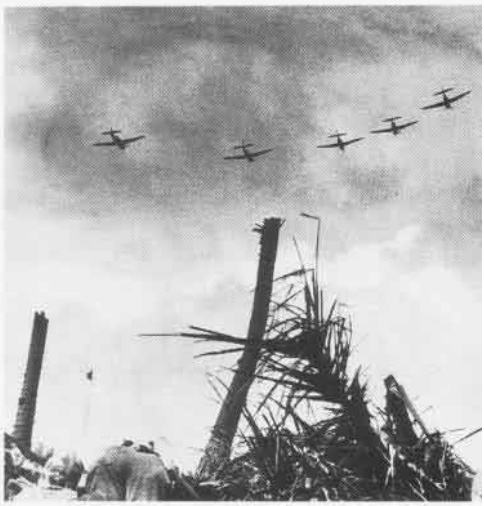
lap busy as the escort carriers and gunnery ships of the amphibious force joined in.

Tarawa's experience had been well digested. Gunships used high and low-trajectory fire with armor-piercing as well as bombardment ammunition against appropriate targets, and carrier air strikes were carefully laid on, delivering a much greater weight of ordnance on target than had been used at Tarawa.

Throughout the night of 31 January, destroyers maintained harassing fire on Kwajalein Atoll's major islands, Roi-Namur and Kwajalein. Early that morning, gunfire ships closed the islands to hammer them at short ranges, while artillery landed on nearby small islands joined in. Army B-24s from the Gilberts dropped heavy bombs on Kwajalein Island, and gunfire was lifted as planes from the fast carriers and "jeeps" bombed and strafed the beach defenses. Communications were better this time; when the Marine landing waves were delayed heading for one of the islets near Roi-Namur on 31 January, carrier planes stayed overhead and continued their attacks until the "amphtracs" were 10 minutes from the beach. Though the relative inexperience of Marines and sailors complicated the capture of Roi-Namur, the air and surface preparation worked well; over half of the Japanese defenders were killed by air attack and gunfire, and most of the islands' defenses were put out of action.

The Army troops that went ashore on Kwajalein Island benefited, not only from careful fire support but from months of thorough amphibious training. The landing went ashore with near-textbook precision. With the help of heavy support from carrier planes and naval guns, the soldiers cleared the island in three days of fighting.

The capture of Kwajalein went so well that Adm. Spruance did not have to commit his reserve troops and was ready to proceed without delay to capture Eniwetok at the western end of the Marshalls group. Japanese bases in the Marianas and on Ponape and Truk could threaten this move, but Adm. Nimitz saw how the carrier force protected the move into the Marshalls



Riflemen of the 4th Marine Division advance on Roi-Namur with the help of carrier planes.

and immediately approved the Eniwetok landing.

The amphibious force and a task group of TF 58 headed for Eniwetok as Army bombers attacked Ponape and Adm. Mitscher took his three other task groups south to hit Truk.

Eniwetok Atoll, at the western end of the Marshalls, was hit by TF 58 on 31 January 1944. Carrier planes worked over the airfield on Engebi Island, destroying planes on the ground and striking island defenses. Air strikes continued into D day, 17 February, when CVEs and bombardment ships joined in. Small outlying islands were taken, and Engebi itself fell the following day. Good-sized forces of crack Japanese troops were concealed on Parry and Eniwetok islands, but these had received only a light air and naval bombardment since they were thought to be unoccupied. Documents found on Engebi revealed the truth; an impromptu bombardment assisted the landing forces, but this turned out to be insufficient. Hard fighting, helped by planes from the escort carriers, was needed before the islands were secured.

Nerves were taut as the carriers approached Truk, long touted as the impregnable "Gibraltar of the Pacific."

Jan 11: The first U.S. attack with forward-firing rockets was made against a German U-boat by two TBF-1Cs of Composite Squadron 58 from the escort carrier *Block Island*.

Jan 29-Feb 22: Occupation of the Marshall Islands – Six heavy and six light carriers, in four groups of Task Force 58 (RAdm. M. A. Mitscher), opened the campaign to capture the Marshalls (Jan 29) with heavy air attacks on Maloelap, Kwajalein and Wotje. Their early achievement permitted the second phase of the campaign – seizure of Eniwetok – earlier than the planned date of May 10. Covering operations were provided by the first strike on Truk (Feb 17-18), carried out by the Truk Striking Force (VAdm. R. A. Spruance), built around three fast carrier groups. In this action, the first night bombing attack in the history of U.S. carrier aviation was carried out by VT-10 from *Enterprise* with 12 radar-equipped TBF-1Cs.

Jan 30: To effect the neutralization of Wake Island during the Marshalls operation, two squadrons of *Coronados* from Midway Island made the first of four night bombing attacks. Repetitions of the 2,000-mile, round-trip mission were completed on February 4, 8 and 9.

Feb 4: In a test of refueling operations with the CVE *Altamaha* off San Diego, Calif., the K-29 of Blimp Squadron 31 made the first carrier landing by a nonrigid airship.

Feb 24: The first detection of a submerged enemy submarine by the use of magnetic anomaly detection (MAD) gear was made by *Catalinas* of VP-63, on a MAD barrier patrol of the approaches to the Strait of Gibraltar. They attacked the *U-761* with retro-rockets and, with the assistance of two ships and aircraft from two other squadrons, sank it.

They reached the launch point undetected by Japanese search planes and, as the first landings went ashore on Eniwetok on 17 February, TF 58's planes rained bombs and bullets on Truk's three airfields, destroying over 200 planes on the ground. They went on to strike warships and merchantmen in Truk Lagoon, and surface warships swept around the atoll to intercept escaping ships. During the night that followed, the carrier force made its first radar-guided night bombing attack, scoring hits and near-misses on ships in the lagoon. The carrier *Intrepid* took a hit from a night-flying Japanese torpedo plane and had to retire for repairs.

When more carrier planes came in the next morning, not a single Japanese plane took to the air. Airfield installations got a thorough going-over before Mitscher ordered his force to retire at midday. The aviators had shown Truk to be a cardboard Gibraltar; naval ships and some 200,000 tons of cargo shipping were on the bottom, some 270 planes were wrecked or damaged and base facilities were hard hit. Tokyo radio reported, "A powerful American Task force suddenly ... and repeatedly attacked our important strategic base, Truk, with a great number of ship-based planes.... The war situation has increased with unprecedented seriousness...." ■

Carriers and "gunships" of Task Force 58 teamed up with the amphibious force to give the Pacific Fleet a powerful one-two punch.

"Island Hopping in WW II – The Marianas" will appear in *NANews*, Mar-Apr 93.

Awards

The 1992 **Captain Arnold Jay Isbell Award** for overall excellence and superior performance in air antisubmarine warfare was awarded to **HS-14**. Sponsored by the Lockheed Aeronautical Systems Company, the award honors the ASW commander under whose leadership planes and escort carriers operating in the Atlantic during WW II developed into a powerful combat force. Capt. Isbell was killed in action in 1945 while serving aboard the aircraft carrier *Franklin*.

VR-57 received the **Air Force Outstanding Unit Award**, the Air Force equivalent to the Navy Unit Commendation, for operations conducted during Operation Desert Storm. VR-57 supported the war effort through joint logistics operations with the Air Force, transporting combat troops, ordnance, spare parts and mail throughout Europe, the Middle East and Southwest Asia. This successful liaison in support of the U.S. Air Force mission earned the "Conquistadors" this recognition.

Tripoli (LPH 10) received the 1992 **National Defense Transportation Association Award** for exceptional performance in operational transportation and logistics support. The ship's crew was cited for their performance during Operation Restore Hope, a humanitarian mission focused on providing aid to the starving people of Somalia.

VAW-116 received the **CNO AEW Excellence Award**. While deployed aboard *Ranger* (CV 61), the squadron flew missions to enforce the United Nations "no fly" zone over southern Iraq in the Persian Gulf.

VA-155 received the **RAdm. Clarence Wade McClusky Award** as the best attack squadron of the year. The award is in memory of RAdm. McClusky, who as an air group commander distinguished himself in leading a bombing attack that destroyed an enemy carrier force during the Battle of Midway in WW II. VA-155 was disestablished 30 April 1993.

Lt. Kris M. Belland, D.O., MC, received the 1993 **Richard E. Luehrs Memorial Award for Naval Flight Surgeon of the Year**. The award is sponsored by the American Osteopathic Association.

The Marine Corps Aviation Association presented the following awards for 1993:

Alfred A. Cunningham Aviator: Capt. Mark A. Dungan.

Robert G. Robinson Naval Flight Officer: Lt. Col. Terry G. Robling.

Aviation Ground Officer: Maj. Paul F. Lease.

Electronic Technician: Cpl. Kurt E. Peterson.

Ordnance Technician: SSgt. John A. Graboski.

Air Command and Control Officer: Capt. Robert J. Crosetto.

Air Command and Control Marine: GySgt. Samuel R. Schmidt.

Bud Baker V/STOL Enhancement: Maj. Glen W. Duncan.

Exceptional Achievement (Individual): Maj. Christobol H. Mendez.

Fixed Wing Aircrewman: GySgt. Jerry L. Lewis.

Helicopter Aircrewman: Cpl. James H. Brown III.

Plane Captain: Cpl. Steven M. Dalrymple.

James Maguire Enlisted Aviation Safety: GySgt. Mark D. Reed.

James E. Nicholson Enlisted Aviation Leadership: SSgt. Michael A. Hoffman.

Commandant's Aviation Efficiency Trophy: VMGR-152.

Edward S. Fris Air Command and Control Unit: MATCS-38.

Robert M. Hanson Fighter Squadron: VMFA-312.

Lawson H. M. Sanderson: VMA(AW)-242.

V/STOL Squadron: VMA-513.

Keith B. McCutcheon Helicopter Squadron: HMM-164.

Henry Wildfang Aerial Refueler Squadron: VMGR-352.

Aviation Logistics Squadron of the Year: MALS-12.

Wing Support Squadron of the Year: MWSS-373.

Pete Ross 4th MAW Safety Award: VMFT-401.

A joint-service **Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) student team** captured first place in the American Helicopter Society's competition for the design of an advanced attack helicopter.

The NPS team, headed by Navy Lt. Mark Couch, topped entries by graduate student teams from Arizona State University, Georgia Tech and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. The team added a fixed wing and deleted the tail

Tripoli (LPH 10) off the coast of Mogadishu, Somalia.

rotor to meet the design requirements. Use of a no-tail rotor concept eliminated drive shafts and gear boxes and made the helicopter more survivable.

In October 1993, the **Yorktown Association**, Patriots Point Naval and Maritime Museum, Charleston, S.C., dedicated two restored historic planes, an F4F-3A *Wildcat* and an AD-1 *Skyraider*, inducted five WW II, Korean and Vietnam War heroes into the Carrier Aviation Hall of Fame, and featured Medal of Honor recipients LCdr. "Butch" O'Hare and VAdm. James B. Stockdale. Inducted into the Hall of Fame with Stockdale were: Adm. Frederick H. Michaelis (posthumously), Col. Arnold Lund, USMC (posthumously), Cdr. Donald E. Runyon (posthumously), and LCdr. Richard H. Best. (See *NANews*, Sep-Oct 93, pp. 22-23.)

Sarah Bradley

VAdm. James B. Stockdale and his wife Sybil with H. Ross Perot at the Carrier Aviation Hall of Fame ceremonies.

Rescues

AM2 Tristan Heaton received the Coast Guard's highest award for heroism, the Coast Guard Medal, for his part in a 4 April 1993 rescue. Heaton, a rescue swimmer stationed at the Astoria, Oreg., air station, was dropped from a helo to help a 17-year-old trapped in a cave at the base of a rugged seaside cliff on the Oregon coast. The youth was wedged in a crevice 50 yards inside the cave when Heaton reached him. As Heaton tried to get the victim out of the cave, 10-foot swells pushed the men under water and against the rocks.

Since Heaton couldn't get out, pilot Lt. Edward Gibbons and copilot Lt. Robert Boris took the helicopter into the cave to rescue them. Once inside, Gibbons and Boris were able to hover the helo while AD Craig Wyatt lowered a rescue sling and basket. It took nearly 30 minutes, but Heaton was able to assist the victim into the basket and hold on as the helo exited the cave. The men were then hoisted to safety.

Anniversary

VMFA-314 celebrated its 50th anniversary on 1 October 1993. The squadron was commissioned on 1 October 1943 at Cherry Point, N.C. It was assigned the F4U *Corsair* and began training for combat in the Pacific.

Records

Several units marked **safe flying time:**

Unit	Hours	Years
HSL-43	75,000	9
HSL-49	20,000	3
NADep Jacksonville	21,000	27
VAW-115	18,500	8
VFC-13	37,800	8
VP-30	277,000	29
VP- 66	80,000	23
VX-5	50,000	

Scan Pattern

As part of an innovative program conducted on board Norfolk-based *America* (CV 66), Army personnel are able to spend time on the ship to relax away from the tense environment in Mogadishu, Somalia. The First Class Petty Officers Association sponsors the visits, which provide a 24-hour break for the soldiers. Flown aboard the carrier daily by an HS-11 helo, the soldiers are given an informal tour by association members. They can enjoy a hot meal, work out, watch TV, visit the ship's store, shower or just unwind.

America and CVW-1 will continue hosting soldiers until the carrier departs theater in February 1994.

Correction: Sep-Oct 93, p. 31, **CNO Aviation Safety Awards** – under ComNavAirPac, VAQ-115 should have read VAW-115.

Cdr. Robert Stumpf resumed his watch as CO of the Navy's flight demonstration squadron, *Blue Angels.* He was relieved of his command in May, following allegations that he witnessed and did not report sexual misconduct at the 1991 Tailhook Association convention. He was cleared of any wrongdoing in October after an exhaustive investigation could produce no witnesses to support the allegations.

Change of Command

Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72): Capt. Richard J. Nibe relieved Capt. James O. Ellis, Jr., 9 Sept 93.

ComNavAirPac 1094: Capt. William J. Logan relieved RAdm. (Sel) John Kerr, 25 Sept 93.

Enterprise (CVN 65): Capt. R. J. Naughton relieved Capt. Daniel C. Roper, 27 Aug 93.

HS-5: Cdr. Theodore H. Brown, Jr., relieved Cdr. Hartmann J. Kircher, 1 Sept 93.

HS-11: Cdr. Gary Stark relieved Cdr. David O'Brien, 5 Oct 93.

HSL-37: Cdr. Richard F. Sears relieved Cdr. Robert J. Scherer, 7 Oct 93.

HSWingLant: Capt. Monte Squires relieved Cdr. J. J. Waickwicz, 12 Oct 93.

NAS Adak: Capt. Walter J. Cummings relieved Capt. E. A. Caldwell, 18 Aug 93.

NAS Kingsville: Capt. Don Maxey relieved Capt. James R. O'Hora, 30 Sept 93.

NAS Meridian: Capt. Robert L. Leitzel relieved Capt. T. L. Hightower, 1 Sept 93.

MALS-13: Lt. Col. Carl L. Hughes, Jr., relieved Lt. Col. Gilda Jackson, 7 Oct 93.

MATSG Cecil Field: Col. John M. Gautreaux relieved Col. John A. Morrison, 1 Oct 93.

NAVAIRES Memphis: Capt. Dave E. Foster relieved Capt. David W. Hundt, 20 Aug 93.

SFWSPAC: LCdr. Scott H. Swift relieved Cdr. James F. Ward III, 30 Sept 93.

VA-34: Cdr. Robert J. Gilman relieved Cdr. Carlton B. Jewett, 1 Sept 93.

VA-35: Cdr. John S. Godlewski relieved Cdr. Richard L. McCollum, 3 Sept 93.

VA-36: Cdr. Mark J. Himler relieved Cdr. Mark T. McNally, 23 Sept 93.

VA-115: Cdr. Richard O. McHarg relieved Cdr. Donald P. Watkins, 3 Sept 93.

VA-165: Cdr. Jim Symonds relieved Cdr. Russ Williams, 28 Oct 93.

VAW-112: Cdr. Randall W. Bannister relieved Cdr. Norvell L. Lilly, 23 Sept 93.

VAW-121: Cdr. Philip S. Pritulsky relieved Cdr. Lawrence E. Tant, 24 Nov 93.

VF-2: Cdr. Edward A. Christofferson relieved Cdr. Brian E. Flannery, 30 Sept 93.

VF-31: Cdr. Randy Clark relieved Cdr. E. W. Gantt, 22 Sept 93.

VF-43: Cdr. Dane C. Swanson relieved Cdr. James K. Nance, 8 Oct 93.

VF-51: Cdr. John A. Sill relieved Cdr. Robert L. King, 28 Oct 93.

VF-97: Cdr. Ernie Wattam relieved Cdr. Kevin J. Thomas, 1 Oct 93.

VF-142: Cdr. John W. Miller relieved Cdr. Gene W. Garrett, 8 Oct 93.

VF-202: Cdr. Stephen Munroe relieved Cdr. Thomas Nagelin, Jr., 31 Jul 93.

VFA-15: Cdr. William E. Gortney relieved Cdr. Joseph Capalbo, 14 Oct 93.

VFA-83: Cdr. Dale E. Lyle relieved Cdr. George E. Mayer, 30 Sept 93.

VFA-105: Cdr. D. B. Martin relieved Cdr. R. W. Nelson, 20 Oct 93.

VMA-124: Lt. Col. William F. Oehl, Jr., relieved Lt. Col. Thomas C. Wagner II, 22 Aug 93.

VP-10: Cdr. Keith F. Koon relieved Cdr. Duane J. Phillips, 21 Oct 93.

VP-11: Cdr. Anthony Winns relieved Cdr. Alex Hill, 24 Jul 93.

VP-47: Cdr. R. Jeffrey Connelly relieved Cdr. Richard S. Hammond, 3 Sept 93.

VP-69: Cdr. Carlton Parker relieved Cdr. Kenneth E. Thompson, 25 Sept 93.

PatWing 11: Capt. Paul Semko relieved Capt. Robert Simpson, 8 Oct 93.

VQ-6: Cdr. Richard Schwenk relieved Cdr. Gary Quick, 31 Aug 93.

VR-59: Cdr. Bill Knell relieved Cdr. Scott Williams, 17 Jul 93.

VRC-40: Cdr. Randall W. Hamilton relieved Cdr. Linda V. Hutton, 13 Sept 93.

VT-4: Cdr. Frederick C. Cook relieved Cdr. Patrick J. Twomey, 24 Sept 93.

VT-7: Cdr. Timothy P. Quinn relieved Cdr. Stuart A. Ashton, Jr., 17 Sept 93.

VT-21: Cdr. David C. Cox relieved Cdr. Dougls A. Undesser, 31 Aug 93.

VT-22: Cdr. Joseph J. Spurr relieved Cdr. Charles W. Nesby, 24 Sept 93.

VT-28: Cdr. Thomas J. Donovan relieved Cdr. William A. Racette, Jr., 3 Sept 93.

VT-86: Cdr. Scott T. Johnson relieved Lt. Col. Robert E. Braithwaite, 20 Aug 93.

VTC-21: Cdr. Jerry L. Manthei relieved Cdr. Carl R. Pierson, 29 Oct 93.

VX-5: Capt. Scott C.. Ronnie relieved Capt. Garth A. Van Sickle, 27 Jul 93.

Out of the Archives ...

Luis DeFlorez and the Three-Ounce Commander

By Lee M. Pearson

As Bureau of Aeronautics (BuAer) Historian, I was privileged to attend a meeting of the Early Naval Aviators Association at Pensacola, Fla., in 1958 or 1959. Thanks to alphabetic assignment to quarters, my roommate at the Bachelor Officers Quarters was VAdm. W. A. Read, USNR, Ret., Naval Aviator No. 1366. He said that after RAdm. John H. Towers became chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics in 1939, he spoke to the New York Naval Commandery. Read, an investment banker, spoke to Towers about the gathering war clouds and the lack of American preparedness. Towers suggested that Read might be able to help with the expansion of Naval Aviation, thus, in 1940, Read was recalled and made a special assistant to Towers. Luis DeFlorez reported about the same time to a similar position. Admiral Towers wanted Read and DeFlorez to look at the many problems BuAer was facing and help resolve some of them.

DeFlorez was small in stature, colorful and unconventional. During WW I, he had worked on aircraft instruments in the Aircraft Division, Bureau of Construction and Repair. Garland Fulton, who had been assistant head of that division, told me that DeFlorez joined the Navy during WW I but didn't get a uniform. He and Lt. Richard E. Byrd (later the polar explorer), disputed bitterly over credit for the bubble sextant. Between the wars, DeFlorez was involved in the catalytic cracking of petroleum whereby gasoline yield was greatly increased; he also learned to fly and bought an airplane. According to his profile in *New Yorker* magazine, he joined the Naval Reserve in the mid-thirties and was ordered to Pensacola. He flew there solo on a very quiet Sunday afternoon, landed, parked his airplane, marched into the operations building and saluted the duty officer, "Lt. DeFlorez reporting for flight training! Sir!"

In BuAer, DeFlorez learned that the Navy was developing a patrol bomber with power-driven turrets. Through a design foul-up, the turrets were too small for a normal man and could not be readily enlarged. As DeFlorez looked at the problem, he concluded near-midgets were needed to man the turrets and asked himself where to find such small men? Rhetorically, he answered, "race horse jockeys." Taking a direct course, he wrote to the commissioner of racing for New York state and requested that jockeys volunteer for naval service.

The Bureau of Navigation (BuNav, predecessor to the Bureau of Naval Personnel) found out about it when jockeys began trying to enlist. Within BuNav, the problem was turned over to an officer that I will identify as "The

Three-Ounce Commander." He was one of the largest men to wear a naval uniform and, as Read explained, "He weighed 300 pounds up to his ears, but from his ears up he weighed three ounces."

The commander called DeFlorez to his office and patiently explained that only BuNav had authority to recruit, and jockeys were ineligible because they were to small too meet the Navy's physical requirements. DeFlorez, equally patient, explained that there had been a snafu in designing a new airplane, that jockeys were the only men small enough to man their turrets and, thus, were absolutely essential. As they reiterated their positions, both men became more excited. Eventually DeFlorez said, "Commander, I don't give a blankety blank for your regulations! We have to have jockeys to man those turret guns." The Three-Ounce Commander responded, "Lieutenant, I don't give a blankety blank for your airplanes and their turrets!" Rising to his feet and towering over the diminutive DeFlorez, he added, "If you don't get out of my office right now, I'll throw you out!"

Crestfallen and fearing that his naval career was in jeopardy, DeFlorez returned to his office and told Read about the meeting. Read told Adm. Towers, who listened quietly and said, "I'll handle it. Tell Luis not to worry." Accordingly, Towers sent a memo to RAdm. Chester Nimitz, Chief of BuNav, requesting that the Three-Ounce Commander be assigned additional duty in BuAer. Nimitz assented and the orders were issued. This meant, of course, that BuAer would submit concurrent fitness reports. The commander attended one meeting in BuAer and everything was amiable.

The jockeys didn't become turret gunners but DeFlorez prevailed. He continued to look for unconventional solutions to the multitudinous problems that the Navy faced during the expansion and WW II. He believed that vast amounts of combat equipment that was badly needed by the fleet was utilized for training; this was very costly and often training was not very effective. In many instances, he believed, special equipment could be designed that would greatly improve the training of officers and men. To this end, he built a team of nonconformists. Needing room for offices and shops, he took over a building that had been occupied by an automobile dealer at 610 H Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. Thus, Project 610 came into being. It proved so useful that it became the Special Devices Division of BuAer, was assimilated into the Office of Naval Research at its establishment and was the forerunner of the Naval Air Warfare Center, Training Systems Division, Orlando, Fla.

NANews Rates High in Your Eyes

By JO1(SW) Eric S. Sesit

Every two years, you, the readers of *NANews*, get an opportunity to tell the editorial staff how you feel about our magazine. A survey card included in our July-August 1993 edition asked for your opinion. Well, the results are in and, once again, we were pleased with how you rated us.

Overall, the total number of responses we received dropped from our last survey. We can only speculate that this is the result of the current Navy downsizing. Because of the force-level cuts, many squadrons are disestablishing, and squadron personnel probably have concerns other than answering a survey card. But for those who did answer, your input was well received.

Fifty-two percent of our survey cards came from the officer community. Lieutenants through captains provided the majority of the responses. Twenty-eight percent of the responses came from the enlisted ranks, with E-5s through E-7s sending in the most cards. Nineteen percent came from civilians or retired personnel.

Most of our responses, 77 percent, came from the Navy and Marine Corps, but we received comments from the other three services as well. Broken down even further, 45 percent of the responses were from Navy pilots, 11 percent from Naval Flight Officers, 14 percent from aircrewmen, 22 percent from maintenance and 32 percent from other fields.

Overall, 87 percent thought that yes, indeed, we do fulfill our mission as the official voice of Naval Aviation, and 97 percent thought our magazine was easy to read and understand. Sixty-six percent rated *NANews* outstanding; 28 percent rated us good; and four percent varied in opinion.

The majority of the responses said our features improved the most, followed closely by our news coverage, photographs and then our layout.

It's no surprise, even though he's been around for more than 50 years, that Grampaw Pettibone is still the most widely read section of our magazine. In descending order, the other sections of *NANews* that readers enjoy the most are: features, history articles, People-Planes-Places, Hal Andrews' Naval Aircraft series, Airscoop, Flight Line, Professional Reading and Flight Bag.

Numbers and percentages don't tell the entire story, though. Your comments really help us look for ways to improve *NANews*. A few examples:

"More Coast Guard articles."

"More information on airborne mine countermeasures."

"Let us know how the Navy does in interservice competitions, such as William Tell, Gunsmoke, etc."

"Not much on helos, what's up?"

"All comments are scrutinized," Cdr. Russ Jowers, the new editor of *NANews*, said. "Our goal is to provide valuable information as well as enjoyable reading. Since the Naval Aviation community is so diverse, we try to maintain a balance of coverage for all communities as well as covering the latest technological advances and missions. We only have so many pages, and it becomes a real juggling act to cover each topic adequately."

Jowers also stressed the importance of input from the fleet. "We have a small staff and limited travel funds. We depend on your articles which tell us what you are doing out there. Your inputs are encouraged and always welcome."

Special thanks to Judy Walters and Rhonda Curtis for their assistance with this article.

By Cdr. Peter Mersky, USNR

Shores, Christopher, Norman Franks and Russell Guest. *Above the Trenches.* 1990. 368 pp. Ill. $55.

Franks, Norman, and Frank Bailey. *Over the Front.* 1992. 250 pp. Ill. $49.95. Grub Street (UK). Seven Hills Distributors, 49 Central Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45202.

These first two volumes of a major trilogy of research on WW I aviation represent new windows into what some readers might consider familiar territory. (The third volume will deal with the Central Powers.)

Above the Trenches presents synopses of all the aces and squadrons of the British Empire, while *Over the Front* discusses American and French aces and squadrons. Individual records, combat reports, and award citations required in-depth research and review – the type that only dedicated historians bring to their work.

Both books are similar in presentation, and if one can afford the steep prices, the rewards and surprises are many. (The only important errors lie in American geography, which I expect is not well known to British authors and publishers. Examples: Everett, Washington, D.C., and St. Jose, California.)

There is amazing detail throughout these books. American readers will be surprised to see that kills were sometimes shared with up to three other pilots. In two-seaters, the kills were individually credited to both the pilot and gunner, no matter who actually shot the enemy aircraft down. Several French aces flew during the 1940 campaign, one gaining a further kill, and others rising to command squadrons before and after the armistice with the Germans.

For those interested in U.S. Naval Aviation, *Above the Trenches* seems to finally nail down David Ingalls' tally. His score has been listed as low as five (some of which were shared) and as high as eight. This definitive work gives him six kills with the RAF.

Both books highlight the point that there are many unknown aces – several with scores approaching and, in some cases, exceeding 40 kills – whose careers and accomplishments have been overshadowed for more than 70 years by a few, more colorful pilots.

Avery, N. L. *B-25 Mitchell: The Magnificent Medium.* PHALANX Publishing Co., Ltd., 1051 Marie Ave., St. Paul, MN 55118. 1993. 200 pp. $29.95.

Written by a design engineer who worked on the B-25, and using 300 well-reproduced photographs, this book is one of the few full-length treatments of the *Mitchell*, which served throughout WW II in every theater. Design of the B-25 power plants, armament and markings are thoroughly discussed and illustrated.

Appendices detail serial numbers for all models, including Navy and Marine Corps PBJs, and production lots. Wartime and postwar use as a high-speed VIP transport and a discussion of B-25s that still survive today round out this impressive effort.

ANA Bimonthly Photo Competition

Cash Awards: Bimonthly – $100; Annual – First, $500; Second, $350; Third, $250.

For deadline and submission details, call (703) 998-7733. Mail photographs to: Association of Naval Aviation Photo Contest, 5205 Leesburg Pike, Suite 200, Falls Church, VA 22041-3863.

The Association of Naval Aviation and its magazine, *Wings of Gold*, is continuing its annual photo contest which began in 1989. Everyone is eligible except the staffs of *Wings of Gold* and *Naval Aviation News*. The ONLY requirement is that the subject matter pertain to Naval Aviation. Submissions can be in black and white or color, slides or prints of any dimension. Please include the photographer's complete name and address, and PHOTO CAPTION.

Lt. Bill Roark won the bimonthly ANA Photo Contest with this shot of UH-46Ds of HC-11 Det 3 from Mount Hood (AE 29) during vertical replenishment operations with Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72). The battlegroup recently returned from a deployment in support of Operation Southern Watch.

Corrections

Sep-Oct 93, "Airscoop," p. 5:

The photo caption reads that the first AV-8B Harrier II Plus "was assigned to VMA(AW)-542, Cherry Point, N.C." The mission of the VMA-(AW), formerly equipped with the A-6E *Intruder*, was transferred to the VMFA(AW), equipped with the FA-18D. East Coast VMFA(AW)s are located at MCAS Beaufort, S.C. East Coast VMAs, equipped with the AV-8B, AV-8B Night Attack and AV-8B II Plus, are at MCAS Cherry Point.

Marine Headquarters & Headquarters Squadron 28 was redesignated Marine Tactical Air Command Squadron 28 to reflect its new mission of planning for and coordinating the Tactical Air Command Center (TACC) for the Aviation Combat Element (ACE), and providing personnel and facilities as components of a Marine Expeditionary Force or Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) TACC. The TACC is the operational command post of the ACE Commander and is the facility from which command and control of all Marine air operations in support of the Marine Air-Ground Task Force are conducted.

Forrestal

I was very pleased to read Steven D. Hill's article, "First in Defense – A History of USS Forrestal (CVA/CV/AVT 59)," in your Nov-Dec 93 issue. *Forrestal* has a special place in the history of Naval Aviation and in my memories, as well.

In 1956, I was CO of VAH-1, the first squadron to operate the A3D-1. We conducted our carquals aboard *Forrestal* in the fall. And what a joy it was – that big steady deck had a great deal of appeal to all the carrier pilots who flew aboard her for the first time. We completed our carquals without accident or incident.

Around the first of November, we began inducting our airplanes into a modification line set up in a hangar at NAS Jacksonville to correct some faults that had developed with our aircraft. On the morning before *Forrestal* deployed for the 1956 Suez crisis, I was called before Commander Fleet Air, Jacksonville, and told to cease the mod line and load every airplane available aboard the carrier. By midnight, we had managed to get six A3D-1s to Mayport, where *Forrestal* was based. Later, the remaining six airplanes of the squadron were deployed aboard *Saratoga*.

We had received the last airplane (number 12) in August. It was quite a feat to make the Suez deployment and the subsequent Mediterranean deployment in January 1957. The squadron was not initially scheduled for a Med deployment for nearly a year.

Please correct your records to reflect VAH-1's Suez deployment. We were the big punch of the task force, and we were ready to do the job!

Capt. Paul F. Stevens, USN(Ret.)
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Hiccups and glitches are bound to infiltrate the best efforts of any researcher and page 23 of *NANews*, Nov-Dec 93, documenting *Forrestal*'s cruises was no exception.

The 2 Sep 58 to 12 Mar 59 Med cruise incorrectly states VF-102 deployed with F8U-1 *Crusaders*. In fact, the *Diamondbacks* had F4D-1 *Skyrays*, which they began receiving in Feb 57 while stationed at Cecil Field, Fla.

VF-103 was inadvertently omitted from this cruise [and a later Med cruise]. The *Sluggers*, with their F8U-1s (referred to as supersonic ballbats), were led by Cdr. Marvin Paul South along with XO LCdr. Franklin T. Stephens. Some of you may remember the port gear suddenly collapsing on one of their F8s while taxiing across No. 1 elevator. No injuries, but it got this young lad's attention.

AMHC Roy L. Leverich, USN(Ret.)
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Ed's Note: The author corrected his listing of Forrestal's deployments, as follows:

Azores (Suez Crisis)
7 November to 12 December 1956

VAH-1	**A3D-1 (added)**

Mediterranen
2 September 1958 to 12 March 1959

VF-102	**F4D-1 (corrected aircraft)**
VF-103	**F8U-1 (added)**

Mediterranen
10 July 1964 to 13 March 1965

VF-74	**F-4B (corrected aircraft)**
VF-103	**F-8E (added)**

Naval Aviation in WW II

John Elliott's "Solomon Islands Campaign – The Isolation of Rabaul," *NANews*, Nov-Dec 93, packs a lot of good information into a short article. In an important way, though, it cuts the story of Rabaul one phrase short – isolation and maintenance of the blockade.

Marine Bombing Squadron 423, with its PBJs on Green Island and three similar squadrons at Emirau in the Manus Group, maintained a 24-hour-a-day surveillance and attack schedule over Rabaul and Kavieng, virtually until the end of the war. The threat of revival of Japanese strength at either of those once potent bases was thus effectively discouraged, if not nullified.

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Reunions, Conferences, etc.

VS-871/VS-37 (1951-54) planned reunion, 1994. POC: D. E. Allison, 5 Scotch Pine, Littleton, CO 80127.

WW II Iwo Jima Survivors reunion, FEB 21-23, Wichita Falls, TX. POC: Iwo Jima Survivors Assn. of Texas, PO Box 1657, Bowie, TX 76230, 817-845-3261.

Blue Diamond (formerly VF-146) officers reunion, MAR 94. POC: LT Jerome Pinckney, VFA-146, FPO AP 96601-6232.

Bennington (CVS 20) reunion, MAR 3-6. POC: Frank Dostal, 3757 E. Ramsey Ave., Apt. 101, Cudahy, WI 53110.

Smithsonian's 28th annual Kite Festival, MAR 26, Washington Monument grounds. POC: Public Affairs, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20560, 202-357-2627.

1st Marine Air Wing (MAG 33) reunion, APR 94, Lancaster, PA. POC: Ken Stoutland, 140 Lenape Trail, Mt. Bethel, PA 18343, 704-322-5445.

Tarawa (CV/CVA/CVS 40) reunion, APR 94, Milwaukee, WI. POC: Walter Swingle, 221 South Ave., Hilton, NY 14468, 704-256-6274.

VC-70 pilots reunion, APR 8-10, Pensacola, FL. POC: John McCaughin, 2628 River Ave., Rosemead, CA 91770, 818-573-3000.

Princeton (CV 37)/LPH 5 reunion, APR 9-11, Charleston, SC. POC: Bob Butler, 1401 Brion Pl., Camanche, IA 52730, 319-259-8219.

Marine Observation Squadrons reunion, APR 15-17, Atlanta, GA. POC: CO, VMO-4, NAS Atlanta, GA 30060-5099, 404-421-5446/7.

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